

GROUND- HOPPER Magazine



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THE MONTHLY MAGAZINE FOR THE INDEPENDENT NON LEAGUE TRAVELLER!



**Merry
Christmas**

**to all
Hoppers**

GROUND- HOPPER Magazine

439 Merton Road, Wandsworth
London SW18 5LB

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THE MONTHLY MAGAZINE FOR THE INDEPENDENT NON-LEAGUE TRAVELLER

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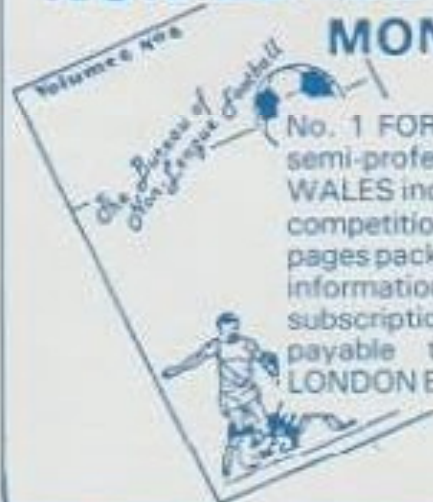
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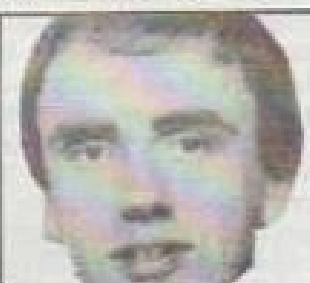
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**GROUNDHOPPER'S
VIEWPOINT**

with
STEVE KING



We are alarmed that an ever-increasing number of letters to our "Hopper Post" pages are from readers who are angry about sending money off to non-league clubs for programmes or badges and receiving nothing in reply. We have already touched on this subject in recent issues, but we believe that it could only be the tip of the iceberg because we also have many other unpublished cases where the general public are not being treated fairly. It seems that Club Secretaries are not doing the duties with which they were appointed by answering mail from people and dealing with any orders for club items such as programmes and badges. Even simple things like general information about the club can often be ignored despite stamped addressed envelopes being sent. It is about time that all Club Secretaries got their act together and started to take responsibility, otherwise they should get out and let someone take over who can do the job properly. At GROUNDHOPPER MAGAZINE, we have personally come across this problem on numerous occasions ourselves, so we can appreciate the frustration and annoyance when the decency of a reply is even out of the question. For example, a feature on the change of grounds by South Western League club NEWTON ABBOT at the end of last season was to be included in our June issue, and there were one or two loose ends to tie up with their Secretary before the article could be completed. Despite THREE letters to the Secretary (including SAE's each time), we didn't even get a reply saying "sorry - cannot help" which is disgraceful. On another occasion, during our visit to SPALDING UNITED earlier in the season, we had arranged in advance for a quantity of programmes to be kept for us to take away. Having paid the money, we were told on the day that the programmes reserved for us were left at home by the Secretary who had left in a rush for the match. They promised that they would be sent out to us by 1st class post two days later on the Monday. That was two months ago, and despite letters to the Secretary since, we have heard nothing - and they still have our money! We want to hear from YOU if you have been badly treated by a non-league club in the same way. Write to us at the usual magazine address and we will see if we can do something about it for you. We cannot promise answers, but we will do our very best to make sure this practice of ripping off supporters is stopped as soon as possible. Secretaries should realize that without the interest shown by non-league enthusiasts, they wouldn't have a club to be associated with in the first place, and the sooner this message gets across to them, the better. Of course, the majority of Secretaries are excellent, answering all queries and dealing with post as it comes in, but there are some who shouldn't be doing the job with which they were appointed. Let us know what YOU think on this subject. Write in now! Finally, on a more cheerful note, merry christmas to all our readers!!!



NEWSDESK

COMPILED BY STEVE KING



A number of ground improvements have been carried out at Key Consultants South Midland League Premier Division club HUDDERSDON TOWN. Most noticeably, an extension has been added to the existing clubhouse which has provided an enlarged Committee room, referee's room and inside toilets for both ladies and gentlemen. The floodlights have also been improved, as has the entrance to the ground where new concrete slabs have tidied up this area. On October 2nd, a showbox XI defeated a Huddersdon Town P.C. veterans XI 6-4 in front of over 300 people to raise funds for the St. Elizabeths Home for Women and Children with epilepsy, Much Hadham. Anyone requiring a copy of the programme issued for the above match should send £1.20 (inc P&P) to Derek Fieldsend, 42 Rodney Crescent, Huddersdon, Herts, EN11 9EW. All proceeds will be going to the above mentioned cause. Send 40p (inc P&P) for a copy of a recent Huddersdon Town programme....Advanced Diary Dates time Easter Monday, March 27th is the Leicestershire FA Junior Cup Final (venue to be arranged), Monday April 24th is the Leicestershire FA Jelson Homes Senior Cup Final (venue to be arranged), and Wednesday May 3rd (provisionally) is the Leicestershire FA Challenge Cup Final, Filbert Street, Leicester, k.o. 7.00pm. Full match programmes WILL be published for all three finals....Groundhoppers may be interested to know that the kick-off time for the Beazer Homes Midland Division match between STOURBRIDGE and BRIDGNORTH on New Years Eve (Saturday) will be 11.15am, and therefore Midland hoppers may wish to take in two or more games on that day....Andy Barr, Hon. Secretary of VOL league club CLAPTON writes: As you are aware, we are approaching the end of our 100th year at the Old Spotted Dog ground. In order to commemorate the 'Ton-up, Tons' we are producing a new Club lapel badge. This will be of a totally different design to any badge previously produced by the club. However, in addition we are to produce a special 'limited edition' lapel badge of which only 200 will be made. These are available to all collectors on a first come, first served basis and application forms are available from us from 1st December 1988. However, there are ways of obtaining a 'priority order form' which may place you in a better position to receive your badge. At our home match with Hemel Hempstead on Saturday 3rd January 1989 (the first match of the next 100 years) we will include in our programme a priority order form. Those applying on such a form have 14 days to apply before other applications are dealt with. The first 200 forms or applications to arrive at my address will receive the Limited Edition badge. The entire operation will be overlooked by our Chairman Mike Fogg. Along with the badge, the recipient will receive a certification of authenticity and a copy of an Affidavit by our supplier undertaking never to produce any more badges of that kind again. The badge will cost £3.00 and the new style (unlimited) just £1.50. We also have the old style badge available at £1.50....If you would like to visit ALBANIA for England's World Cup match in March, Bryan Clark of Leigh, Lancs is trying to get a trip organised for around 15 people. The tour would cost around £431 per person and would be from 6-14 March 1989, inclusive of excursions, scheduled flights to Titograd via Belgrade, full board, tickets for the match, etc. As the Albanians are very strict on the numbers they will allow into their country, and will not allow individuals or groups of less than 15 for any reason, this exclusive GROUNDHOPPER MAGAZINE offer should be snapped up straight away. If interested, please contact Bryan Clark at 6 Alt Close, Leigh, Lancs, WN7 5BD (Tel: 0925 826333 (day) or 0942 677105 (home)....A 'Mail on Sunday' magazine on non-league soccer will be launched at the end of the year. It will be in full colour and contain 64 pages, and GROUNDHOPPER MAGAZINE will be covered with a two-page feature on groundhopping in general, plus an advert for the magazine so look out for that....

As you will see from the Groundhoppers Club News pages, Steve Pettit has announced his intention to give up the post of Club Secretary. We at GROUNDHOPPER MAGAZINE are naturally sorry to hear of Steve's decision, but it is a decision we respect. Steve's spare time is fairly limited these days, and he feels that he cannot really do justice to the job as he is so heavily involved in work and his commitments to Huddersdon Town. But GROUNDHOPPER MAGAZINE will be continuing with the club as per usual, and we have some very exciting ideas lined up for next year, and we will be arranging a full programme of conventions as well at some interesting places. We will have more news about this change in our next issue.

WELSH RABBIT

All the latest news and gossip from the Welsh non-league scene with David Collins



The rare coincidence of a fine Saturday and Sully playing at home presented the ideal opportunity to pay my first visit of the season to Burnham Avenue, to see the side threatening to turn the Abacus Welsh League Premier Division into a one-horse race. The ground is on common common land, only yards from the beach (does anyone know of a senior ground closer to the sea?). A lovely spot in good weather but the only shelter against the elements is the clubhouse overhang which gives a poor view of the pitch. Sully are unable to charge for entry but issue an excellent 50p programme - almost certainly the best in the league.

Sully are impressive on the pitch, destroying Merthyr reserves the day I visited, and still unbeaten after 12 matches. There's little doubt that this side would achieve at least a mid-table position in the National Division, but will they get the chance? The ground doesn't comply with National Division standards and it seems unlikely they will be allowed to charge for admission or build a stand on the common. Recently, Sully approached Penarth rugby club with a view to sharing the Athletic Ground but were turned down. I hope commonsense prevails - a town the size of Penarth should be on the soccer map anyway - and Sully would be an asset to the National Division.



LEFT:
Sully's Burnham Avenue ground, pictured during the Sully v. Merthyr Reserves match.

PHOTO: DAVID COLLINS

I had hoped to report here on Sully's nearest challengers, Ammanford Town, but British Rail prevented me from watching their 3-3 draw at Abercynon, marooning me on a failed train for most of Saturday afternoon. Thanks, B.R!

Recent experience suggests that the top Premier Division teams are superior to the National Division strugglers: in the 5 years since its formation, only Caerau and Blaenrhondda have been relegated from the National Division, and both have found life very tough in the Premier. By contrast, Abergavenny have made a satisfactory start in the National. Llanelli, temporarily demoted, are in mid-table in the Premier.

The Welsh League have a difficult balance to strike: the standard of grounds is an important part of the "professional image" of the National Division, and there is no doubt it is an incentive to lower clubs to upgrade spectator facilities. But on the other hand, poor playing records must lead to relegation.

The next requirement for National Division clubs may be lights. Abergavenny already have plans to join the eight clubs already 'lit up'.

Meanwhile Ferndale, one of the Premier sides with lights, may have to play fewer evening matches because of the £31 charge made by Rhondda council for use of the Darran Park lights for a match.

Llanidloes Town of the Manweb League recently switched on their new lights at Victoria Avenue. And another ground improvement in the Manweb League came at Rhayader's Weirglodd ground where the stand has been extended, the extension having been named the Bill the Goat stand in memory of a loyal supporter.

I've heard reports of some Manweb League teams failing to raise a full side recently - the latest example was when Morda visited Llandrindod Wells: the Morda team were on the pitch ready to start when they were told their hosts had called the game off.

I'll take this opportunity of wishing all readers an enjoyable christmas and new year. I'll be back next month with news and reports from recent Welsh FA and Intermediate Cup games.



THE EASTERN SCENE

— with PADDY LILLISTONE —

A news round-up from East Anglia
and the surrounding areas

With a quarter of the season gone, it is worth taking a quick look around the East Anglian leagues.

In the Jewson League, the running is being made by NISTON TOWN, who will be hoping to make it a Fenland 'double' by emulating the success of March Town last season, but snapping at their heels are the formidable BRAINTREE TOWN and SUDBURY who both have Beazer Homes aspirations.

A mixed story for the area's three Beazer Homes clubs, with CHELMSFORD CITY and BURY TOWN predictably amongst the front runners in the Southern Division and KINGS LYNN struggling somewhat in the Midland Division.

In the Essex and Suffolk Border League, CONNARD UNITED have a 100% record and Sudbury-based sides hold second place as well with WANDERERS holding that position. The Suffolk & Ipswich league title looks like being the closest with the

coastal duo of WOODBRIDGE TOWN and GRUNDISBURGH locked in battle at the top of the table, whilst further north, the Anglian Combination League is the most interesting for several years with the three clubs setting the pace - BECCLES, ST. ANDREWS and OVERSTRAND all surprise packets.

One league which already looks out and dried is the newly formed Jewson Second



The grandstand at
Great Yarmouth
Town F.C.

PHOTO: TERRY MANNING

Division where the Norfolk based WROXHAM, with a host of players with Football League experience, including the former West Ham star Keith Robson, are already in a seemingly uncatchable position.

If you are looking for a trend in the leagues around the area so far, it is that they are nearly all led by 'surprise sides' and this is making for an interesting season here on the Eastern side of the country.

Club Factfile: WROXHAM

Former Anglian Combination side WROXHAM are now runaway leaders of the Jewson League Division 2. Their ground is situated about 1 mile from the town on the main A1151 road from Norwich. To the left of the railway line, take another left at the Castle pub and left again down a narrow lane to Trafford Park. Wroxham can be reached by rail from Norwich or the occasional bus.

The ground is bordered on two sides by trees, with the railway line passing close to the far side with a floodlit training area behind the goal which is used as additional parking on match days. There is a small stand on one side with WROXHAM F.C. on the fascia - opposite is a row of about 20 seats. The dressing rooms and clubhouse are both of the portacabin type with the latter having a bar, pool table, etc and a tea hut serving hot drinks, snacks, etc.

With the team well away at the top of the table, the race is on to get the floodlights necessary for Premier Division football, ready for next season, and they hope to make a start on these next month. Certainly they have team to bring success to this Norfolk outpost, with at least seven players having experience in the professional game with Norwich City including Keith Robson, who also played with West Ham.

6 Last season, Wroxham celebrated their centenary with a place in the Jewson League

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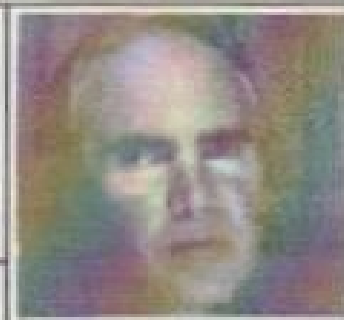
- GROUNDS IN FOCUS -



ABOVE: Chipperfield Corinthians (Herts County)
BELOW: Caledonian F.C. *PHOTOS BY LEO HOENIG.*



The TONY MIDDLETON Column



THE MONTHLY COLUMN FOR ALL HOPPERS

TAKING THE HIGH ROAD

When Les suggested that a visit to the Glasgow Garden Festival would be a good starting point for a holiday, I was not exactly over-enthusiastic. Until it occurred to me that there is plenty of football in Scotland, at any time of year. So, on the last Thursday in August, off we set, stopping first at Middlesbrough for the speedway. We stayed at Whitley Bay overnight, and the first thing we saw was a gigantic banner advertising a football tournament, starting at 9.30 Friday morning. The Churchill Playing Fields housed ten pitches, and matches were going on left, right and centre. I was both surprised and pleased to find an excellent glossy programme on sale for just 30p. We did not stay to watch all the matches, but, after a stop long enough to take in a new ground, we went north to Edinburgh, visiting the Farne Islands en route.

As we left Edinburgh speedway in the evening the rain simply fell down, and we had the rain with us for the entire fortnight. Heavy rain greeted us on the Saturday, and we headed briefly for Loch Lomond, before returning to Dumbarton for the match with Queen's Park. I was pleasantly impressed with Boghead Park, and even more so when I discovered a club shop. Unfortunately it has only just opened and stocks were low, but the manager told me he is hoping to have badges soon (real enamel badges, not the plastic rubbish,) and was looking for a manufacturer who would be happy to supply him with a small quantity. I explained that he would have no trouble in selling 100 or more if he advertised them, and when I left he was quite enthusiastic about getting in touch with Toby Jackson. Let's hope he did so. Plenty of scenic views from Boghead, and three goals saw Queen's take the points.

Les does not like Glasgow in the evening. The main reason is that all the lamp posts are in danger of falling down. At least, we think that is why someone is always propping them up. Have you even tried to find a vacant lamp post in Glasgow on a Saturday evening? So it seemed appropriate to take a trip into the Trossachs, when, purely by coincidence, Aberfoyle were at home to Killearn, in the final match of the Forth and Endrick League. We arrived to find five coaches already there, but these turned out merely to be tourists, who, having bought postcards and taken photos of the view, rushed back to their coaches to take in the next beauty spot. We found the ground easily enough, in the shadow of a gigantic mountain, and what a ground. It was three parts under water, rutted, and with pot holes nearly a foot deep. The touchline was a crazily zigzagging line of sawdust. The match could not possibly start. But start it did, with splash off at 1900. It was watched by 50 spectators and thousands of vicious widges, who mounted a non stop attack on all foolish enough to stand near them. Aberfoyle won 3-2, after the visitors had had their goalkeeper sent off. No programmes were produced.

Sunday saw us at the Glasgow Garden Festival, a very wet one at that. After five hours of tramping around in a deluge, we had had enough. This left us just enough time to take another scenic drive into the mountains, this time to Lennoxtown, where Milngavie just happened to be playing Knightswood in a semi final match. The pitch was, needless to say, submerged. But the groundsman was not in the least concerned. It will be bone dry by kick off, he said cheerfully. He was half right, in as much as large puddles still lay everywhere, but at least the red

shade underneath was visible. Once again no programmes, but there was a crowd of some 250 in attendance.

Back to the Garden Festival for the Monday, and three matches to pick from for the evening. We chose Queen's Park, who were at home to Celtic at Lesser Hampden in a reserve match. The pitch was in magnificent condition after heavy rain, but the terraces are so broken down that they are dangerous. Over 400 spectators saw Queens win 4-2. I was more than pleased to take in a match at Lesser Hampden, but once again there were no programmes.

On to Fort William for the Tuesday, and by now the rain had reached monsoon proportions. We went the scenic way, and had plenty of spectacular views of waterfalls cascading down the mountains and over the roads. The good news was that there was a match on at Fort William. The bad news was that it was postponed. The pitch was in surprisingly good condition, and I felt it could easily have gone ahead. Ben Nevis towers up alongside the ground, though much of it was lost in the cloud.

The next day we made our way to an even wetter Outer Hebrides, where we stayed for over a week, and then back we came to take in one more match on the mainland. Plenty of choice, but we chose to go to Stirling Albion. This was the only ground that I was not impressed with. The surface is artificial, and is by far the worst I had yet seen. The main stand was only large enough to hold 50 officials, although the terracing was quite good. I could not find a club shop, although I understand that there is one somewhere. What did impress me was the excellent programme, easily the best I have seen in Scotland. I arrived at 1425, and was one of the first inside the ground. Even then there were only a handful of programmes available, and all were sold out by 1435, with only about 150 people in attendance at the time. By kick off time there were 750 spectators, few of whom had programmes, and this is simply not good enough. The visitors were Queen's Park, who lost 3-2 in an entertaining match.

Overall, a pleasant holiday, with the Hebrides the highlight of the trip. But does it even stop raining in Scotland.

COMING NEXT MONTH

The February 1989 issue of GROUNDHOPPER MAGAZINE will again contain 40 pages, and will be sent out on Tuesday 3rd January. These are just SOME of the items we have lined up for the next issue....

- * Club Shop Review will feature GM Vauxhall Conference club ALTRINCHAM.
- * Our League Directory guide will feature THE DAN-AIR FOOTBALL LEAGUE, and will contain useful information for hoppers including details of nearest railway stations, whether programmes are issued, telephone numbers, etc.
- * A special feature on the runaway success of WROTHAM in the 2nd Division of the Jevson League, and why ACCRINGTON STANLEY are on the way back up the ladder of success. Exclusive reports on these two clubs + photos in next issue.
- * NEW FEATURE! "The four sides of...." is a picture-guide to a different non-league ground each month where all four sides of the ground are photographed, plus other facilities at the ground to bring you a complete pictorial guide to the ground. The first of these new guides is next month.
- * There's all the regular features including "Spot the Ground", "Welsh Rabbit", Letters, dozens of previously unpublished photos, news, GH Club News, plus the latest badge and programme news from Toby Jackson and Ron Jones.
- * John Pease gives his account of his groundhopping holiday in Sicily, plus exclusive photos.
- * Plus lots more!

So look out for the bumper FEBRUARY 1989 issue of GROUNDHOPPER MAGAZINE, mailed out on 3rd January 1989. Apologies for the non-appearance this month of the previously advertised features on Liskeard and Supermarine. These will appear soon in GHM, but because of lack of space, we could not feature them this month.

FOCUS ON

BY RICHARD BRIGGS

BRIDPORT

Bridport are one of the top sides in Dorset. Last season, they won their third successive Dorset Combination League crown, the Dorset Combination League Cup and the Dorset Senior Cup, beating Dorchester Town and Poole Town on the way.

This season, they are back in the Great Mills league after an absence of five years. Nicknamed the Bees, they had a spell in the Western League between 1969 and 1983, withdrawing for financial reasons.

Bridport have been very successful over the years, winning the Western League Cup and Merit Cup, the Mark Frowde Cup and the Dorset League title besides the honours outlined earlier.

They play in a strip of black and red at St Mary's Field, a 1,500 capacity ground just off the town centre. Bridport is a small south west Dorset town, near the very commercial seaside village of West Bay.

Bridport town centre is basically three streets, West Street merging into East Street, and South Street, which is just off the other two.

East Street merges into East Road, which in turn merges into the A35 (eastwards).



To find St Mary's Field, go down South Street until you pass all the shops and turn right into Skilling Hill Road. The ground is about 50 yards up this street on your right.

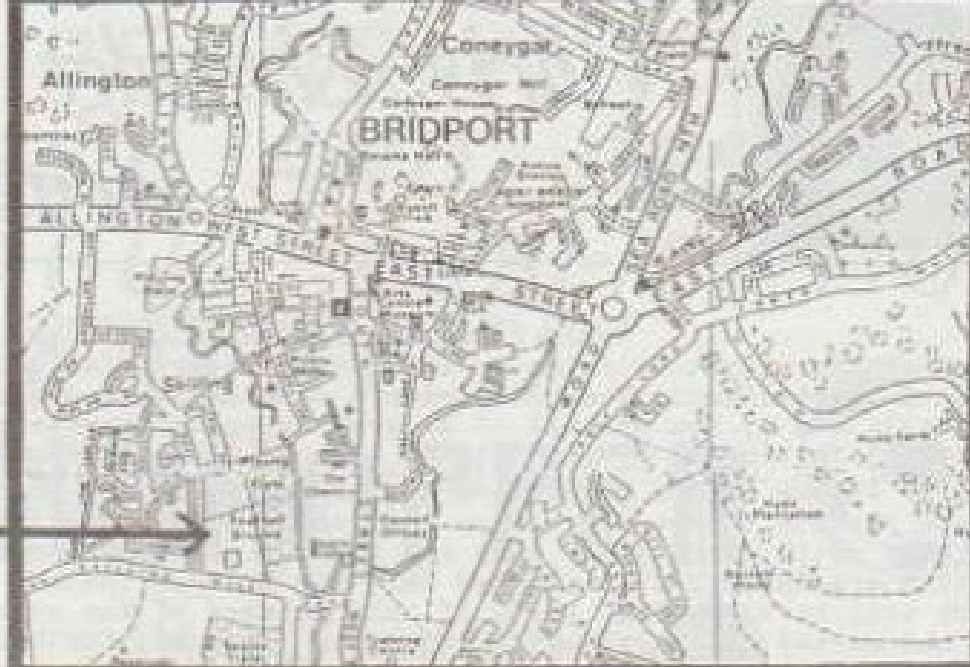
St Mary's Field has a large car-park beside it. Walking through the car-park will take you to the paying in box. Last season, entrance for Combination League games was 70p and a 12 page programme was 10p extra.

Straight in front of you from the paying in box is some covered accommodation which runs about half the length of the pitch. It can cover about 300 people. Opposite this is a smart grandstand with a capacity of about 250.

At the far end of the ground are the dressing rooms, toilets and a superb clubhouse, the Beehive.

The record attendance at the very picturesque ground was set in 1981

BRIDPORT F.C.



when 1,150 people turned up to see a game with Exeter City.

Bridport are still very well supported. They had gates of over 200 for some Combination games last season and the average was well over 100.

They are due to play midweek Great Mills League first division games at St Mary's Field on Tuesdays.

The Bridport secretary is Keith Morgan, and he is a very helpful man. You can contact him at home on Bridport 25113. The club telephone number is Bridport 23834.

The town of Bridport has a number of good pubs to eat in and quite a few shops to look at. There are lots of pretty villages very nearby including the hamlet of Pymore, which has a soccer team in the Perry Street League.

Bridport is in easy reach of bigger towns like Dorchester and is also close to the seaside resorts of Lyme Regis and Weymouth.

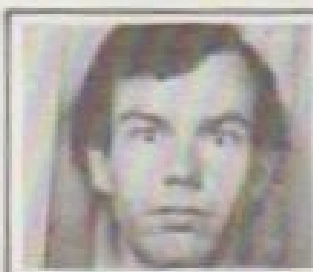
If you want to visit West Bay, just keep going down South Street, which merges into West Bay Road. Stay on that road and you are at the seaside!

£5



MONTHLY DRAW

This month's Groundhoppers Club £5 cash prize winner is:- *Andy Millar, 3 Tonbrook Close, Bexley, Kent, DA5 1ES. Member No. 112.*



Chris Ashbridge writes

EXCLUSIVE!

NORTH ATLANTIC AND ARCTIC FOOTBALL

Following the recent articles in GHM, which covered football in the north of Scotland (particularly Tony Middleton's fascinating account of football in the Hebrides), and my own account of my groundhopping experiences in Scandinavia, perhaps it is time to branch out and look at football north of the Shetlands. Firstly, let us take a brief look at the Faeroes (pronounced 'Faroe') islands. In case you don't know where they are, and I myself was largely ignorant to their existence until about 1986, they are a group of some 20-odd islands - all but one of which are inhabited - situated half-way between Iceland and Scotland. Some of you will have heard of them, if only because of the savage cull of pilot whale that has earned these islands notoriety. However, football promises to make them somewhat better known. The Faeroes have recently become members of FIFA (although do not expect to see them competing in the World Cup!) and there are some superb footballing facilities in the capital, Torshavn. In fact, football in the Faeroes is so interesting that I shall be devoting a full article to the subject in a future issue of GHM.

Further north we come to Iceland, a country whose football you all know something about. Their national team has been achieving some respectable results of late, and from what I know it appears that in the summer of 1989, one or two groundhoppers may be the first ever to watch football in Iceland. No, I'm not the groundhopper concerned, although I do hope to go there in either 1990 or in 1991. The only problem is that because it has the highest standards of living in the world, Iceland is a horrifyingly expensive country for tourists, whether or not they are groundhoppers. When I go there, it will certainly be a diet of supermarket food and tap water for me!

Programme issuing, despite the country's affluence, is not as widespread as it is in the other Scandinavian countries like Sweden and Norway. Although this kind of information was not easy for me to discover, it does seem to me that there are no more than 15 clubs or so, all in the top two divisions, who issue for league matches. Of course, there may be teamsheets available at other clubs. A widely held fallacy about Icelandic football is that the Laugardalsvöllur (the national stadium in Reykjavik) is used by all the Reykjavik clubs. In fact, KR and Valur both have their own grounds which they usually play their home league matches at. Vikingur used to play at the national stadium but recently moved to a new ground at Fossvogur (situated in a southern suburb of Reykjavik). This leaves Fram as the only club (I believe) who regularly use the Laugardalsvöllur.

Incidentally, there are two smaller grounds next to the Laugardalsvöllur. One is used by Reykjavik-based 2nd and 3rd Division clubs and the other, which has artificial turf, is used by all Reykjavik-based 4th Division clubs. This synthetic pitch offers a guarantee against postponements which is just as well since Iceland is a very wet and windy country. To get to matches, don't try looking for trains - there aren't any!! There are plenty of buses though, but if you want to watch a match in Akureyri (Iceland's major town in the north) you could go by plane, if your Access balance will allow it.

If I can afford it, I can't wait to go to Iceland! Let us now go further north still to Greenland. Yes, believe it or not, competitive football is actually played in Greenland. A league championship has been regularly contested since 1971 and the 1987 title was won by Kiseravarsuk - 1933 (K-1933 for short). Anyone wanting the full list of champions can obtain a copy by sending a S.A.E. and a 14p stamp (to cover the cost of photocopying) to my address below. The list also includes details of the locations of the clubs who won the title. Now it's time for some myth-debunking. Firstly, contrary to what some of you may still believe, the locals do not live in igloos! In fact, there are actually blocks of flats in the capital, Nuuk (population 12,000). Furthermore, the locals prefer to be known as the 'Inuit' people rather than as 'Eskimos' which means 'eater of raw flesh' (apologies if I have put you off your appetite). Lastly, it is not true that there is permanent snow and ice. In the summer it melts to some extent, at least enough for them to play their football matches.

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LEAGUE DIRECTORY



USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS, HOW TO GET THERE, PLUS
OTHER INFORMATION

THIS MONTH: SKOL NORTHERN LEAGUE

Each month, we are bringing GROUNDHOPPER MAGAZINE readers a club-by-club listing from a different league, with useful information such as ground address, telephone numbers, whether programmes are issued, nearest railway stations, etc. We will be featuring in particular some of the less publicised leagues where information is not always readily available to groundhoppers. This month, we are featuring the SKOL NORTHERN LEAGUE DIVISIONS 1 and 2. We hope you will find this guide useful when planning your trips to any of the clubs featured.

DIVISION ONE

BILLINGHAM SYNTONIA : Ground: The Stadium, Central Avenue, Billingham. Colours: Green & White. Programme: Occasionally. Tel: 0642 552358 (G), 0642 535856 (Sec). Nearest Railway Station: Billingham.

BILLINGHAM TOWN : Ground: Sedford Terrace, Billingham. Colours: All Blue. Programme: Regular. Tel: 0642 560043 (G), 0642 555332 (Sec). Nearest Railway Station: Billingham.

BLYTH SPARTANS : Ground: Croft Park, Blyth. Colours: Green & White, Black. Programme: Regular. Tel: 0670 352373 (G), 0670 369031 (Sec). Nearest Railway Station: Newcastle.

BRANDON UNITED : Ground: Welfare Ground, Near Commercial Street, Brandon. Colours: All Blue. Programme: Occasionally. Tel: 091 3781730 (G), 091 3781778 (Sec). Nearest Railway Station: Durham.

CHESTER-LE-STREET TOWN : Ground: Points North, Chester Moor, Chester-Le-Street. Colours: Blue & White. Programme: Regular. Tel: 091 3883363 (G), 091 3887307 (Sec). Nearest Railway Station: Durham.

CROOK TOWN : Ground: Millfield Ground, West Road, Crook. Colours: Amber & Black. Programme: Regular. Tel: 0388 762959 (G), 0388 762026 (Sec). Nearest Railway Station: Durham or Bishop Auckland.

DURHAM CITY : Ground: Perens Park, The Sands, Durham. Colours: Amber & Royal Blue. Programme: Regular. Tel: 091 3869616 (G), 091 3845924 (Sec). Nearest Railway Station: Durham.

FERRYHILL ATHLETIC : Ground: Darlington Road, Ferryhill. Colours: Amber & Black. Programme: Never. Tel: 0740 51937 (G), 0740 51177 (Sec). Nearest Railway Station: Darlington.

GREYTHORN : Ground: Raydale Park, Dominion Road, Gretna. Colours: Black & White. Programme: Regular. Tel: 0461 37602 (G), 0461 37447 (Sec). Nearest Railway Station: Carlisle.

GUISBOROUGH TOWN : Ground: King George V Field, Howlebeach Road, Guisborough. Colours: Red & White stripes. Programme: Regular. Tel: 0287 36925 (G), 0287 38993 (Sec). Nearest Railway Station: Middlesbrough.

NEWCASTLE BLUE STAR : Ground: Wheatsheaf Sportsground, Woolsington, Newcastle. Colours: All Blue. Programme: Regular. Tel: 091 2860425 (G), 091 2732655 (Sec). Nearest Railway Station: Newcastle.

NORTH SHIELDS : Ground: Appleby Park, Hawkey's Lane, North Shields. Colours: All Red. Programme: Regular. Tel: 091 2570282 (G), 091 2579044 (Sec). Nearest Railway Station: North Shields.

SEAHAM RED STAR : Ground: Seaham Town Park, Stockton Road, Seaham. Colours: Red & White. Programme: Regular. Tel: 091 5812540 (G), 091 5679472 (Sec). Nearest Railway Station: Seaham.

SHILDON : Ground: Dean Street, Shildon. Colours: Red & White. Programme: Regular. Tel: 0388 773877 (G), 0325 316322 (Sec). Nearest Railway Station: Shildon.

SOUTH BANK : Ground: Normandy Road, South Bank, Middlesbrough. Colours: Red & White stripes. Programme: Occasionally. Tel: 0642 453193 (G), 0642 596709 (Sec). Nearest Railway Station: Middlesbrough.

SPENNYMOOR UNITED : Ground: The Brewery Field, Durham Road, Spennymoor. Colours: Black & White. Programme: Regular. Tel: 0388 814100 (G), 0388 815168 (Sec). Nearest Railway Station: Bishop Auckland.

STOCKTON : Ground: Teesdale Park, Acklam Road, Thornaby, Stockton. Colours: Red & Black stripes. Programme: Regular. Tel: 0642 606803 (G), 0642 587871 (Sec). Nearest Railway Station: Stockton.

TOW LAW TOWN : Ground: Ironworks Road, Tow Law. Colours: Black & White.
 Programme: Occasionally. Tel: 0388 730247 (G), 0325 50743 (Sec). Nearest
 Railway Station: Durham or Bishop Auckland.
WHITBY TOWN : Ground: Turnbull Ground, Uppang Lane, Whitby. Colours: All Blue.
 Programme: Regular. Tel: 0947 603193 (G), 0947 601769 (Sec). Nearest Railway
 Station: Whitby.

DIVISION TWO

ALNWICK TOWN : Ground: St James Park, Alnwick. Colours: Black & White stripes.
 Programme: Regular. Tel: 0665 603162 (G), 091 2366456 (Sec). Nearest Railway
 Station: Morpeth.
ASHINGTON : Ground: Portland Park, Ashington. Colours: Black & White stripes.
 Programme: Occasionally. Tel: 0670 812210 (G). Nearest Railway Station:
 Newcastle.
BEDLINGTON TERRIERS : Ground: Welfare Ground, Bedlington. Colours: All Red.
 Programme: Regular. Tel: 0670 825485 (G), 0670 827528 (Sec). Nearest Railway
 Station: Newcastle.
CONSETT : Ground: Belle Vue Park, Consett. Colours: Red & White. Programme:
 Regular. Tel: 0207 503788 (G), 0207 503646 (Sec). Nearest Railway Station:
 Newcastle.
DARLINGTON CLEVELAND BRIDGE : Ground: Neasham Road, Darlington. Colours: All
 Yellow. Programme: Occasionally. Tel: 0325 469735 (G), 0325 462753 (Sec).
 Nearest Railway Station: Darlington.
ESH WINNING : Ground: West Terrace, Waterhouse, Esh Winning, Durham. Colours:
 Yellow & Green. Programme: Occasionally. Tel: 091 3733872 (G), 091 3733611
 (Sec). Nearest Railway Station: Durham.
EVENWOOD TOWN : Ground: The Welfare Ground, Evenwood, Bishop Auckland. Colours:
 Blue & White. Programme: Occasionally. Tel: 0388 832281 (G), 0388 833035
 (Sec). Nearest Railway Station: Bishop Auckland.
HORDEN CW : Ground: Welfare Park Ground, Park Road, Horden. Colours: All Red.
 Programme: Regular. Tel: 091 5180248 (G), 091 5870727 (Sec). Nearest Railway
 Station: Seaham.
LANGLEY PARK WELFARE : Ground: Low Moor Road, Langley Park, Durham. Colours:
 All Blue. Programme: Regular. Tel: 091 3731526 (G), 091 3731381 (Sec).
 Nearest Railway Station: Durham.
MURTON : Ground: Recreation Park, Church Lane, Murton. Colours: All White.
 Programme: Occasionally. Tel: 091 5268136 (G), 091 5261962 (Sec). Nearest
 Railway Station: Murton.
NORTHALLERTON TOWN : Ground: Ainderby Road, Romanby, Northallerton. Colours:
 Amber & Black. Programme: Regular. Tel: 0609 2418 (G), 0609 779354 (Sec).
 Nearest Railway Station: Northallerton.
NORTON & STOCKTON ANCIENTS : Ground: Station Road, Norton, Stockton-on-Tees.
 Colours: Amber & Black. Programme: Regular. Tel: 0642 554031 (G), 0642 581360
 (Sec). Nearest Railway Station: Stockton.
PETERLEE NEWTOWN : Ground: Eden Lane, Peterlee. Colours: Sky Blue & White.
 Programme: Regular. Tel: 091 5863004 (G), 091 5814591 (Sec). Nearest Railway
 Station: Peterlee.
PRUDHOE EAST END : Ground: Kimberley Park, Broomhouse Road, Prudhoe. Colours:
 Sky & Navy Blue stripes. Programme: Occasionally. Tel: 0661 35900 (G),
 0661 32140 (Sec). Nearest Railway Station: Newcastle.
RYHOPE CA : Ground: Meadow Park, off Stockton Road, Ryhope. Colours: All Royal
 Blue. Programme: Regular. Tel: 091 5236555 (G), 091 5235601 (Sec). Nearest
 Railway Station: Sunderland.
SHOTTON COMRADES : Ground: Recreation Ground, Welfare Park, Station Road, Shotton
 Colliery. Colours: All Blue. Programme: Regular. Tel: 091 5268259 (G),
 091 5265054 (Sec). Nearest Railway Station: Seaham.
WASHINGTON : Ground: Albany Park, Spout Lane, Concord, Washington. Colours: All
 Red. Programme: Regular. Tel: 091 4177779 (G), 091 5491384 (Sec). Nearest
 Railway Station: Newcastle.
WEST AUCKLAND TOWN : Ground: Darlington Road, West Auckland. Colours: All White
 with Black & Amber tria. Programme: Occasionally. Tel: 0388 834403 (G),
 0388 604375 (Sec). Nearest Railway Station: Bishop Auckland.
WHICKHAM : Ground: Glebe Ground, Rectory Lane, Whickham. Colours: Black & White
 stripes. Programme: Regular. Tel: 091 4883054 (G), 091 4884644 (Sec).
 Nearest Railway Station: Newcastle.
WILLINGTON : Ground: Hall Lane, Willington. Colours: Blue & White stripes.
 Programme: Regular. Tel: 0388 746221 (G), 0388 745297 (Sec). Nearest Railway
 Station: Bishop Auckland.

IS IT GOOD FOR NON-LEAGUE FOOTBALL THAT SO MANY CLUBS ARE
MOVING TO NEW GROUNDS? BY TOBY JACKSON

There is no simple answer to this question as although the reasons behind relocation may be sad reflections on the state of Non-League football, the outcome of such moves may be most beneficial.

Let us take a look at the current situation of the club of which I am a Director, Wealdstone. In the 1984/85 season we became the only club to win the "Double" of F.A. Trophy and Gola League (now GM Vauxhall Conference). Despite this unparalleled success, our net profit for the year was under £7000. It was not however the achievements on the pitch that led to this small profit situation, but the receipt of £55,500 from Coventry City upon the transfer of our ex full-back Stuart Pearce to Nottingham Forest, due to a clause in the contract which gave us the right to a percentage of any profit obtained upon a subsequent on-sale. Thus it was only Brian Clough's purchase of the now Forest Captain and England International that eradicated our customary annual loss of anything between £40,000 and £80,000. Is it any wonder then that drastic measures must be considered to put a club on a firm financial footing?

It is sad that even a side of the ability of our Double side could not attract regular four figure crowds. Geographically we suffered from proximity to Watford, then in the First Division, not to mention being within easy access of all the major London clubs by underground or car. Although the Harrow area and its catchment area holds a sizeable population in terms of potential support, London's rival attractions, sporting and otherwise, result in little local fervour for Lower Mead beyond the devoted hard core. Pride in one's town side amounted to a banner at the Post Office to send Wealdstone on their way to Wembley!

Wealdstone's sole asset is the Freehold of its ground. Being on the edge of Harrow town centre, a shopping destination of growing appeal, the only way to clear mounting debts is to cash in on the host of multi-nationals waiting to pounce on such a potentially lucrative site. Relocation in our case would, dependant upon finding an alternative site in the Borough at the right price, provide sufficient profit to allow investment income in future years to cover the onerous wage bill and running costs demanded to maintain a Non-League club in the top echelons of the Non-League Pyramid.

Of course to the Lower Mead terrace faithfuls, relocation is tantamount to sacrilege. History and memories become intermingled in the feel of a stadium over the years, and a new concrete construction cannot replace such an atmosphere overnight. Nevertheless, one has to look at matters sensibly and practically. No matter how wealthy a Chairman one has, a

club cannot continue to run at annual losses of the size seen at Wealdstone. Football clubs lose money because their facilities are limited, they provide inadequate entertainment and comfort to attract the "floating" fan, and football is the only outlet for a stadium which remains empty and useless other than on match days.

Our plans at Wealdstone of necessity will revolve around a complex that can generate income every day of the week. With sports and catering facilities that the general public can enjoy daily, the club will no longer have to rely on money taken at the turnstiles once a week and erratic bar takings. It is an exciting concept to contrive from scratch a new football arena devised to provide soccer in the most pleasing environment. With new stadia springing up around the country, there are plenty of examples to follow and mistakes to learn from. One thing is sure: unless football is packaged in surroundings that attract the average man in the street and, of major importance, his family, rather than continuing to ignore their needs and their relevance to a club's prosperity, then there will be several more volumes of "Defunct FC" and too many happy property developers for anyone's liking.



Northwich Vics' Peter Sayer shoots wide in his side's 1-0 FA Cup victory at Eastwood (Hanley). LEO HOENIG. 17

MY 10 FAVOURITE GROUNDS VISITED IN NON-LEAGUE FOOTBALL

This month: GEOFF AUSTIN OF HARLESDEN.

Keep your "10 Favourite Non-League grounds" articles coming in. Just write to us at the usual magazine address. This month, it is the turn of Geoff Austin of Harlesden, North London, who tells us about his choice, and why he selected them.

1. **CARSHALTON ATHLETIC** : My first-ever visit to a non-league ground. Plenty of goals, even though the Arsenal team comprised little-known reserve and youth team players for this friendly on 7.8.65, won by Gunners 9-1. It made me want to go back, which I did another eight times that season - a disastrous one for Carshalton, who continued throughout the season in the way they began - pretty ineptly, and they ended up being relegated from the Premier Division of the Athenian League. I have a great fondness for this ground, and try to go back once a season if I can.

2. **DULWICH HAMLET** : The Dulwich ground, which Casuals were sharing at that time, has fascinated me since those first two visits in November 1965 for the Cor-Cas v. Watford FA Cup 1st Round tie with Watford (1-5) and v. Brantham Athletic (3-0) in the 4th Qual. Round of the FA Amateur Cup. The echoes of past glories are somehow captured in this large, yet so often almost empty ground. One of my school masters, Dick Joyce, was playing for Casuals at that time, so for that first match, among 10,000-odd crowd were lots of schoolmates cheering him on. (not that it did a lot of good!). There was a terrific atmosphere that day, but a fortnight later I went alone to an almost deserted ground to see Casuals take on little Brantham of the Essex & Suffolk Border League. Such a contrast, as I think that day, the gate consisted of myself, a man and his proverbial dog lost on the terraces.

3. **LIMPSFIELD BLUES** : (Yes, a really unusual one!). This was v. Horley in the Surrey Intermediate League - Southern Section on 27.4.68, which Horley won 2-1. By now I suppose I could consider myself a true "groundhopper", even if the name hadn't been coined yet, as I'd made trips to quite a few Southern, Isthmian, Athenian, Spartan and Surrey Senior League clubs. The name Limpsfield Blues had long intrigued me. Did they play in blue (yes), and why season after season did they always seem to be at the foot of the Surrey Intermediate League? Always one for supporting the underdog, I sought out their ground at Glebe Field, High Road, which was at the back of the Church Hall in the High Street. Limpsfield had won the prettiest village in Surrey competition several times, and I discovered that the village team had an attractively situated ground at the foot of the North Downs, with a clubhouse, but no covered spectator facilities. Limpsfield eventually dropped out of the Surrey Intermediate League, and I think they now play in the Redhill & District League.

4. **DORKING** : Some twenty miles further west along the foot of the Downs from Limpsfield is the town of Dorking, and their Meadowbank, Mill Lane ground is also attractively situated. I've been to the ground several times over the years, always enjoyed my visits, and have seen the club in several guises, as for a few seasons in the mid-seventies they were 'taken over' by not-so-near neighbours Guildford, and played as Guildford & Dorking United in the Southern League. It is not generally known that when the hybrid club folded midway through the 1976-77 season, the new Dorking Town club were immediately formed and took over the outstanding Suburban League fixtures of the old Guildford & Dorking United Reserve XI for the remainder of that season with considerable success.

5. **WYCOMBE WANDERERS** : A visit to the second-most notorious slope in non-league football was made for the visit of Crystal Palace in a friendly on 13.11.78 which Palace won 2-0. Mind you, with Wycombe soon to move across town to a new ground I would advise all groundhoppers who haven't yet seen a game here to get along quickly. I found it most amusing just watching - it must be really difficult for visiting players to adjust their game to the slope. Another ground with great character.

6. **FISHER ATHLETIC** : I really think this ground at Salter Road deserves a place in my top ten. I had previously seen Fisher play a Spartan League match at their Mitcham ground, but I went to Surrey Docks Stadium on 20.9.83 for their Southern League Cup 2nd Round tie with Canterbury City, who Fisher thumped 4-1. The old ground was a pretty run-down place if ever there was one, so all credit to Fisher for their achievements at this excellent modern stadium that suddenly appeared among the ruins of Docklands. Each subsequent visit has seen the whole area become more attractive, as the redevelopment of Docklands continues, and I am looking forward to future visits to Fisher Athletic.

7. HOLBEACH UNITED : --ha I hear you say -- at last we've got out of the South-East of England! Well, this one appears in my top ten, because my visit to Carters Park ended off a really memorable day. Firstly, it was the third leg of my first-ever three games in a day excursion. The morning had seen me luckily beating the soon-to-be-announced ban on visitors to Kenilworth Road, where Luton beat Arsenal 3-1, followed by an exciting afternoon at Rockingham Road, Kettering where visitors Wealdstone clinched the Gola League championship with a late goal. Although I wouldn't consider myself a Wealdstone 'fan', they are my local club, so there had to be a few beers to celebrate. While doing this I glanced at my newspaper for the first time that day, and suddenly noticed that Holbeach had an evening kick-off. A quick check of my watch and the map meant it was just about 'on' to get there in time, so downing my pint quickly I set off, and just made it as the match kicked off. The game itself was a rather dour relegation struggle against St. Neots Town in the U.C.L. Premier Division (4.5.85) which the visitors won 1-0, but the friendliness of some of the Holbeach supporters I got talking to made my evening. They seemed amazed that someone should be 'mad' enough to drive all the way from London, just to see a match at their ground. Their hospitality was much appreciated, even though I had to refuse most of the drinks that were offered me, as I'd already had a few, and had also to consider my impending long drive home.

8. WINGATE : Scanning the non-league fixtures on 26.4.86 in the morning papers, I opted to visit Wingate for the match v. St. Margaretsbury. Unfortunately the paper did not indicate that the kick-off was 2.00pm and not 3.00pm. Also (my car being off the road), I hadn't bargained for an hour's wait for a 107 bus! I arrived at about 3.40 to see the players leaving the field. I thought at least I would see the second half, so imagine my chagrin on learning that the match had just ended. However, luck was with me that day, as it transpired that the reserves had a match immediately following, hence the early 1st XI kick-off. A very entertaining game it was too against Hemel Hempstead Rovers Reserves (4-1) in the Herts Senior County League - Reserve Div.3, but the visit was most memorable for the hospitality shown by Wingate's Secretary Bill Orkin. During the match, he walked round seemingly talking to all the spectators - in particular those he didn't know. Eventually he picked me - and a fellow groundhopper - out, insisting on buying us cups of tea in the Clubhouse at half-time, recovered for us a couple of the match programmes from the 1st XI players who had changed and were just leaving, and when he learned of our difficulty in reaching the ground, arranged for another club official to give us a lift to the comparative civilisation of Golders Green Underground station after the match. Seat that for friendliness and hospitality to groundhopping visitors!

9. WIMBORNE TOWN : This is a nice rural ground at Cuthbury, Cowgrove Road in Wimborne Minster, Dorset, but to be honest I didn't see it at its best, as it poured with rain throughout this entertaining FA Cup tie with Clandown on 13.9.86 which ended in a 2-2 draw. Memorable to me though - as it was longest after-match stay - although this was not a decision that I had any choice over. Having positioned myself under my umbrella at various points of the ground during the first half, and found that even the covered terracing roof was leaking, I decided to view the second-half from my car, which I had parked immediately behind one of the goals. However, windscreen wipers going at full speed, not to mention a Radio 2 soccer commentary tends to drain a car battery. When the match was over, you've guessed it - the car wouldn't start. So I made for the Clubhouse, to make a phone call to the A.A. It was a two-hour wait until the A.A. man arrived, but it was giving me time to become quite friendly with some of the Wimborne supporters over a pint or two!

10. EAST HAM UNITED : Well, why not finish off with a ground I've actually played on! Actually, it's the second non-league ground I've appeared on. This was, of course, the Groundhoppers Club convention on 22.8.87, and was a most enjoyable day out. East Ham Youth XI v. The Groundhoppers XI (6-1) was followed by the East Ham United v. Brentwood game in the Essex Senior League (0-2). Well done Steve Pattit for the organisation, and also East Ham Secretary Reuben Gane for ensuring such hospitality. The East Ham ground may not be the best in non-league football, but it does have a quaint charm of its own. As for the rainstorm that marred the main match, it made the weather I'd encountered at Wimborne seem pretty tame. The water was even pouring through the East Ham Clubhouse roof, but thank goodness it didn't stop the beer flowing!

COVER PHOTO THIS MONTH

This month, our photo is of the stand at Gloucestershire Northern Senior League club BERKELEY TOWN F.C. Our thanks to Leo Hoenig for supplying the photo.

Staffordshire League action as John Hulze scores for Hanford v. Congleton Town (Res). The photo was taken from Eastwood Hanley's ground v. Northwich Vics. PHOTO: LEO HOLKIN.



GROUND-HOPPER Magazine

Sandridge Rovers attacking in the match against BAC Stevedore. PHOTO: LEO HOLKIN.



Start of the rout. Robert Nicol scores the first of Buckin Thistle's goals in the 8-2 Highland Cup win at Heithes. PHOTO: LEO HOLKIN.



Morley Rovers in action during the 1-0 home defeat by Cockfosters in the Herts County League. PHOTO: LEO HOLKIN.



French trip left me hopping mad!

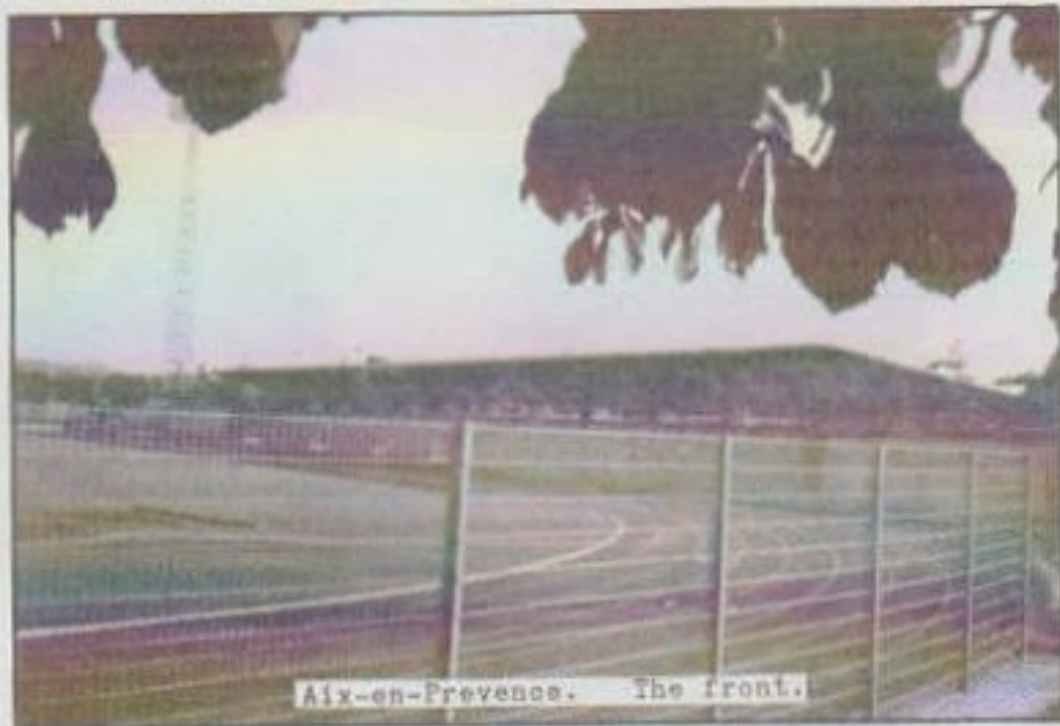
by RICHARD
BOGGIS

Prior to the summer of 1988, my groundhopping had been confined to England, in mainly the south-east. This is not to say that I only like English football, quite the opposite in fact, as I am a fan of all British and continental football. I just haven't had the money or time to go off to Holland every weekend.

Now was my chance at a taste of live European football which I had previously only read about. It was a family holiday and I wasn't sure of the season opening date so I hadn't made any football arrangements. I would have to rely on my French and tourist centres.

My two weeks was an absolute fiasco in respect to football, a measly one game in two weeks! There were a number of reasons why I only managed one game, which would bore you all to death if I attempted to list them all. Anyway, this is an account of the one game that I did get to, which was a failure in itself.

I had the September issue of *GROUNDHOPPER MAGAZINE* with me but all the games listed in France were out of the question for one reason or another. My game was in Aix-en-Provence where I was staying. The tourist centre was no help so I had to go to the ground to find out what was on, or off as the case may be. The ground had the usual running track around the pitch and a fence surrounding the track. There was a massive stand on one side and nothing on the others.



Aix-en-Provence. The front.

There were no posters so I decided to go inside. After having tackled a dangerous looking fence to enter the ground, I saw an open gate about five yards away. The pitch was being sprayed by hoses, but still there were no people. I took photos of the stand to satisfy my needs and was then approached by a huge French man. But I needed no explanation for my presence and was told the time and date of the next match.

I turned up about half an hour early to get a good position. I had cash at the ready but I just walked in as no-one was at the gate. Had I got the correct day? There was one man at the foot of the stand. Although he understood my question I couldn't make out the answer. He had about three goes at replying but it was unsuccessful so I just said 'yes' and sat down. By 7.10pm there were about seven people and by kick-off at 7.30pm (odd for France) about 200 had turned up. At present the facilities consisted of seating and a man selling beer from a box. At least the game was better than the effort put in to help the spectators.

Aix-en-Provence. A view from the back of the stand.



C.S. Faverges in the French Alps.



The ground at a holiday resort in the south, La Cistat.



CONTINUED ON PAGE 29

NON-LEAGUE BOOKSHELF

Each month we review books, magazines, handbooks, or any publication with a non-league connection. If you would like your publication reviewed on this page please write to: Groundhopper Magazine, 439 Merton Road, Wandsworth, London SW18 5LB enclosing a copy.

The eighth edition of the excellent A REVIEW OF NON-LEAGUE FOOTBALL IN HERTS 1988-89 is now out, at the ridiculously low price of just £1.50 for 250+ pages and again, editor Derek Fieldsend has done a magnificent job. This year, the book has a better look to it, properly bound instead of heavy staples, with a very neat card cover on white card, containing a black & white action photo, as printed in red and black. There are also photos on the inside front and back pages, and the contents include facts, figures, league tables, comments on the season, and the unique directory of clubs in Herts, which this year includes even Watford FC. Not only does it give maps for each club as to how to get to the ground, it contains all the information you could possibly want to know if travelling to any of them, so it is ideal for groundhoppers. Apart from the usual information such as programme details, telephone numbers, addresses, club house details, etc, it even tells you whether the club operates a raffle on wet days!! It contains some fascinating facts, and its great strength is the meticulous attention to detail throughout. There is very little advertising in it, which is amazing considering the low price. Even if you are remotely interested in Herts football, you will still find this an excellent source of reference because it is easy to read and well presented. One can only admire Derek for the amount of time and effort he has put into this production, which is increasing in popularity and prestige as each season goes by. If you would like a copy of the book (and who wouldn't?), just send £1.50 + 30p p&p to: Derek Fieldsend, 42 Rodney Crescent, Hoddesdon, Herts. EN11 9EW. Believe me, you will not be disappointed.



Since its launch a year or so ago, PROGRAMME SCENE has gone from strength to strength, and for £1, you get 60 pages of news, reviews, competitions, feature and articles on programmes, mainly from football but with the occasional dip into programmes from other sports. When it first came out, it looked like a poor imitation of the well-established 'Programme Monthly' and didn't look to have much of a future having to compete with such a successful magazine, but it has improved beyond all doubt since those early days, and although still not a perfect layout, the content is very good now, with interesting articles from its readers. It doesn't have the classified section that PM has, with only one or two pages here and there available to readers, but there is more emphasis on the unusual programmes from home and abroad. The big let-down sadly is the cover, because the review issue we looked at for October 1988 had a pink photo copied paper cover, with the title of the magazine somewhat obscured, and if it tried a full card cover, or even a glossy one, with maybe a better design and the use of colour, I am sure it would be more eye-catching than the present design.

There are articles on the Scottish and Irish programme scene, facts, 'Programme People' with a look at a different dealer each month, reproductions of covers, and much more in every issue. For a copy, send £1 + 25p p&p to:- Programme Scene, Shaun Brown, 67 Newark Road, North Hykeham, Lincoln, LN6 8RA.

It also lists forthcoming fair dates, but the copy we reviewed did not have to much on the non-league programme scene, although there was a GM Vauxhall Conference Programme of the Year Award feature. But it is still good value at £1, and I am sure programme collectors will enjoy reading 'Programme Scene'.

CLUB SHOP REVIEW THIS MONTH: **EVESHAM UTD**

**NO.
4**

There is a new club shop open this season at EVESHAM UNITED. The shop, which was given a brief mention in our special "Club File" feature on Evesham Utd in issue No.14 of GHM, is a welcome bonus for spectators at Common Road, as the Midland Combination is not noted for having Club Shops at grounds in this league. Simon Price, who runs the shop, is doing an excellent job in building up the stock at the shop, and now has a varied selection of both Football League and non-league programmes on sale. The non-league programmes are in the main from other clubs in the Midland Combination or from clubs in the Worcestershire area, although there are plenty from other leagues on sale as well. Also available at the shop are other Evesham United programmes from previous seasons as well as current season back issues, plus Evesham United souvenirs such as sweaters, tee-shirts and sweatshirts, club badges are also on sale, as well as lottery tickets and other souvenirs. The programmes are neatly laid out on shelves behind the shop staff, as well as on the counter, and the staff are very friendly and helpful. Programme exchanges with other clubs are always welcome, and this also helps to keep a varied selection of programmes available, so if you make a visit to Common Road, make sure you take a selection of programmes along if you would like to do a 'swap' with Simon in the shop.



The shop is easy to find, because it is almost the first thing you will see when coming through the main entrance at the ground. It is at the end of the block of grey buildings behind the goal just as you come into the ground (see photo), and although it is not of the walk-in variety, there is plenty of display area to browse through the programmes available.

So far this season, the shop has proved a great success with the spectators at Common Road, and is also a pleasant surprise for visitors to the ground, especially from those of the opposition who maybe are not used to seeing Club Shops on their travels around the Midland Combination circuit.

And with Evesham being in such a delightful part of the country, groundhoppers are regular visitors to Common Road.

Simon also writes for the programme, regularly penning a 'Junior Page' for the younger supporters as well as running the shop, so if you have yet to visit the Common Road ground, Evesham, you are advised to get in quickly because there is every chance that Evesham United will be moving to a new ground in due course. And in such a lovely part of the country, with swashing pubs, very good programme and a club shop thrown in, what more could a groundhopper ask for?

NEXT MONTH'S FEATURED CLUB SHOP REVIEW : ALTRINCHAM F.C. (G.M. VAUXHALL CONFERENCE)



HOPPER POST

The LETTER OF THE MONTH now earns the sender a 'Groundhopper Magazine' notebook and a set of six coasters in presentation box.



HERE'S YOUR CHANCE TO HAVE YOUR SAY

What do you think of the magazine? Do you have any amusing groundhopper tales? Do you have any comments about Non-League Football in general? Write to:

Hopper Post,
Groundhopper Magazine
439 Merton Road,
Wandsworth SW18 5L

Dear GROUNDHOPPER MAGAZINE,

The article by Richard Crabtree in the October 1988 issue of GHM was of particular interest to me. I wrote a letter to the GH Club Journal about an organised minibus trip to the continent. Allowing that we all have different preferences when it comes to watching football, I was still disappointed with the response.

Trevor Miles of Reading was the only person to contact me.

I shall be interested to know how many people have expressed an interest to you.

Should the idea ever take off I should certainly be very keen to travel with you.

I will be getting in touch with Trevor to get his opinion.

If the response is favourable and a trip is organised, the sooner I could be

advised the better, as I work a continental style time-off pattern, and I could

then arrange some time off.

MICHAEL COYNE, 100 HUBERT ROAD, SELLY OAK, BIRMINGHAM, B29 6ER.

Thanks for your letter, Michael. We have had one or two people expressing an interest in such a venture, and we will be considering a programme of trips, hopefully including continental ones, for 1989. As you will see from the special announcement by Steve Pettit elsewhere in this month's issue, GHM will be taking over the running entirely of the GH Club in due course, and we have many exciting ideas lined up for next season, so keep reading this magazine for details. (Ed)

Dear GROUNDHOPPER MAGAZINE,

I am writing to you as an average reader of your magazine, with a few observations on your publication. I have no personal axe to grind, and listed below are my own thoughts on November 1988's issue.

Groundhopper Viewpoint : Topical but will anybody bother to write in?

Welsh Rabbit : OK, for the three Welsh groundhoppers!

Thames Valley Round-up : If you want to read about Abingdon Town or Utd it's OK but why Scunthorpe Utd? How long have they played in Berks or Bucks?

Tony Middleton's Column : I can only assume the "old literary juices" had stopped. Who wants to read about HIS holidays?

Club File : Good.

Chris Ashbridge Writes : I flick straight past this. How dull! When is he going on a tour of Siberia? (For good hopefully).

League Directory : Waste of space.

Leo's Lines : Very good.

My Ten Favourite Grounds : Normally very good (was November's supposed to be for Spot the Ground).

Spot the Ground : OK.

Rules of the Game : Why bother to print this Leo Hoenig article on a subject that has already been discussed dozens of times? Surely it is each to his own. What is Leo Hoenig to issue guidelines?

Hopper Post : Apart from the personal back-stabbing in recent issues, OK.

My Month : Very Good.

Club Shop Review : In principal a good idea but the Cheltenham piece was just a re-hash from an earlier issue.

Badger's Set : Interesting, if not used to further the authors business interests. Newport (IOW) article : Very good and informative.

Groundhopper News : Good, although I hope we don't have to read about Hednesford Club Shop on a monthly basis.

Midland Diary : Although I am Southern-based I find the articles very interesting.

Programme Scene : Good.

Non-League Bookshelf : OK.

Having consulted a few of my mates who are also non-league fans, and also read GROUNDHOPPER MAGAZINE, they also agree with the views expressed above. You are

continually saying it's your magazine - well now you've had our opinion.

THE AUGUST THE 2nd CLUB (ALIAS THE SLOUGH AWAYDAYER'S), 70 APPLETREE AVENUE, YIEWSLEY, WEST DRAYTON, MIDDLESEX.

That's what I like to see - satisfied customers! I'm glad you like the magazine so much. Obviously we are never ever going to please all the people all of the time, but we try to bring a varied and balanced mixture of news, information

photos to each issue. (Ed)

Dear GROUNDHOPPER MAGAZINE,
 I feel that GHM would benefit from fresh writers. The magazine does seem a little 'stale' of late. This is no fault of you or any of the writers, but people such as Steve Pettit (very good) writing three articles a month, it gets a little tedious. As I say, it is no fault of the writers, it is just that styles of writing are always the same, and I feel that your readers could do with a change. RICHARD BOGGIS, 18 GARNETTS, TAKELEY, BISHOPS STORTFORD, HERTS, CM22 6RJ.
 And a merry christmas to you too, Richard! Thanks for your honest viewpoint on the magazine. As you are all sick of us stressing the point that this is your magazine, all I will say is that we would love people to contribute to these pages but unfortunately, most people cannot be bothered to put pen to paper, and prefer to just read other people's views, and that's why we have a team of 'regular' writers. Sadly, the very ones to complain usually are those who do nothing about it by contributing in a positive way. That is always the problem a magazine editor has when bringing out a publication - and I am not in the least bit surprised that most of you lot out there can't be bothered to send in your stories of groundhopping adventures, letters, photos, news, or indeed anything that may be of interest to other readers. To most people, it's just too much effort, and there is very little we can do about it.

Dear GROUNDHOPPER MAGAZINE,

Following the letter by J Taylor of Osterley in issue 13 of GHM, I would like to add some opinions of mine to the subject of clubs who fail to issue programmes when one would have reasonably expected them to do so. In this particular case, Jim Taylor said that he failed to obtain programmes at midweek matches at Havant and Hailsham. I don't know if he realises this, but programme issuing is compulsory in these leagues (Wessex and Sussex County respectively).

In my groundhopping 'career' to date, I have, on only one occasion ever, visited a club who broke the compulsory programme rule. This occurred on my visit to Sussex County League side Newhaven FC for a midweek match in August 1985. No programme was issued for this match, although programmes left over from the previous Saturday's home match were to be found in the paybox. The fact that the match was played a couple of days after the August Bank Holiday may well have had something to do with their failure to issue, but at least a single sheet could easily have been printed.

I was so annoyed by Newhaven's blatant disregard for the rules that on my return home I penned a letter to the Chairman of the Sussex County League. Hopefully something was done about it when he received my letter (I didn't get a reply, but then again, I didn't enclose a s.a.s. so I couldn't really complain). The point I wish to make is that I would like all groundhoppers to write to the officials of leagues where issuing is compulsory but the club they have visited has broken the rules. I am not trying to intimidate or harass clubs. In fact I do appreciate that some clubs do have difficulty in issuing programmes from time to time, but it is important to remember that groundhoppers are, interestingly enough, the only people who are capable of enforcing the 'compulsory programme' rule!

I must stress that I am not trying to be too hard on Newhaven FC. Programmes apart, it is an interesting ground to visit. On my return there, I had the unique experience of being able (by standing in the right part of the ground) to simultaneously see the match kick off and the 6.30pm Newhaven-Dieppe ferry leave the nearby harbour! Can anyone beat this?

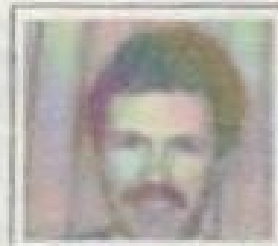
CHRISTOPHER ASHBRIDGE, 64 NURSERY ROAD, SOUTHGATE, LONDON, N14 5QH.

Thanks for that letter, Chris. Programme issuing is a sensitive subject with a lot of groundhoppers, and many are extremely upset when a programme is not actually issued when it should have been. Particularly for midweek matches, there can be problems from time to time, so it is always vital that a quick phone call to the Club Secretary on the day prior to the match is made to get assurances that there will be a programme available when you get there. (Ed).

THE EASTERN SCENE (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6)

and there seems little to prevent their success story continuing. For groundhoppers unfamiliar with the area, Wroxham is a lovely town on the Norfolk Broads with boat trips and cosy pubs an added attraction for the visitor. Programmes are issued for all home matches. Ground details: Trafford Park, Skinners Lane, Wroxham, Norfolk. Tel: 06053 3538. Words by John Gillingham.
 Programme News: Suffolk & Ipswich League side LEISTON TOWN are issuing on a regular basis this season. Editor Petros Marakis is a former Greek First Division goalkeeper and he counters criticism of his spelling by offering a free pizza to anyone spotting a mistake - providing they can spell the word in Greek? Copies of the programme from Roger Smith (Sec), 67 Kings Road, Leiston, Suffolk, IP16 4DA. Another side newly issuing are Essex & Suffolk League side HATFIELD PEVERAL.

BADGERS SET



with
**TOBY
JACKSON**

Welcome once again to BADGERS SET where, having completed our look at the Vauxhall-Opel League last month, I shall now move on to the badges of the Beazer Homes (Southern) League South Division.

At Walled Meadow, Andover at present can only offer a plastic badge in red, black and green featuring the lion of their nickname in front of a central tree. I show a former enamel Supporters Club issue to a similar design. Despite having ex-Wealdstone Double-winning Captain, Paul Bowgett, as their Manager, my enthusiasm for badges has not yet rubbed off on Baldock Town. None on offer at Norton Road. One of my issues however can be found at Ford Meadow where Buckingham Town have a smart circular badge featuring their Robin motif.



Burnham FC have no badges on sale at Wymers Wood Road, nor have I been able to encourage a reply on the subject. Bury Town by way of contrast have an excellent Supporters Club gilt badge which I show alongside. An unusual shape which makes the badge distinctive. At Kingsmead Stadium, Canterbury City can supply a classy green enamel badge depicting their crest: one of the best badges in the Kent area.



There is a brand new enamel badge at New Writtle Street where I was delighted to assist Chelmsford City's Supporters Club with production requirements. The Essex club held a competition to come up with a suitable design in their match-day programme, and the badge shown was the outcome. No badges yet at Corinthian's Gay Meadow ground, nor at Cressey Park where I believe stocks of the badge depicted, their last issue, have long since expired. Nevertheless, the club state in the new Non-League Directory that they do have badges again, so I am trying to obtain clarification. In the Directory, Erith & Belvedere also are listed as having badges though I have seen no enamel issue other than the old Supporters Club issue of years gone by shown. Has anyone seen badges at Park View recently?



Folkestone Town are another club to stock plastic badges, expensive ones at that. A smart crest that would look so much better in enamel. An old issue is shown instead. Gravesend & Northfleet stock a circular badge in red & white with a scroll beneath. Not always easy getting a prompt reply from The Fleet's Shop crew by post, but usually worth the wait. The Club Shop at Hastings Town contacted me in January about having more badges made as their stocks of the badge shown ran out some time ago. I believe they are trying to re-stock. I recently produced a badge for Hounslow's Supporters Club, but I have shown their Football Club's badge which is also a good seller at Denbigh Road.



Poole Town sell a very smart enamel badge at Wimborne Road. Expensive, but a distinctive and a



bright badge featuring the dolphin in their nickname. With crowds the size of those seen at Ruislip this season, I feel that even my powers of persuasion could not encourage a badge production at Breakspear Road, but perhaps if gates improve! Salisbury stock a sizeable enamel badge, rather distinctive in its format and one of the most popular sellers on my lists. No badges at Sheppey United, so I have shown an old issue from their Supporters Club.



Thanet United brought out a new badge last year in the shape of a shield with scroll below. An interesting follow-up to the excellent circular badge that preceded. At Longmead Stadium their Kent rivals Tonbridge issue a light blue enamel badge which is rather unimaginative in design bearing in mind their nickname of "The Angels". It would be interesting coming up with a new design there! The last two Beazer Homes clubs both stock my productions: Trowbridge Town's ornate crest transcribes well into enamel against a gold background, whereas Witney Town's shield-shaped badge in yellow and blue came third nationally in the Association of Football Badge Collectors' poll for badges produced in 1986.



Thanks once again to Mike Woolnough for the use of his Badge Directory illustrations above. His Catalogue featuring 3000 League and Non-League badges is still available for £7.00 plus 70p P&P from 131 Chatteris Avenue, Romford, Essex. RM3 8JY. Mention GROUNDHOPPER when you write! My latest lists of badges for sale can be obtained by sending a large SAE to 25 Tulip Court, Nursery Road, Pinner, Middlesex. HA5 2AP. I hope that I'll see some of you at my stall at the 12th Giant New Year Programme Fair at the Great Western Royal Hotel, Praed Street, Paddington, London W2 on Sunday, 8th January. The Fair starts at 10.30 a.m. Until then, have a great Christmas: see you next month!



FRENCH TRIP LEFT ME HOPPING MAD (from page 23)

I couldn't work out who was the home side but after a goal, someone would change the scoreboard. Twenty minutes, and a goal, surprise, surprise - no-one went near the scoreboard! By full-time I had worked out who was who by the response to the goals. Aix won a hard-fought game 3-2.

My day will have to be remembered by the ground photos as there was no programme. I will never forget the day, for two reasons. Firstly, it was a complete failure, and the centre-forward who missed six open goals and had to be carried off when a ball hit him in the stomach.

I did get to see other grounds, and photos accompany this article.



La Ciotat again.



THE DUBLIN HOP

BY A R HOWELL

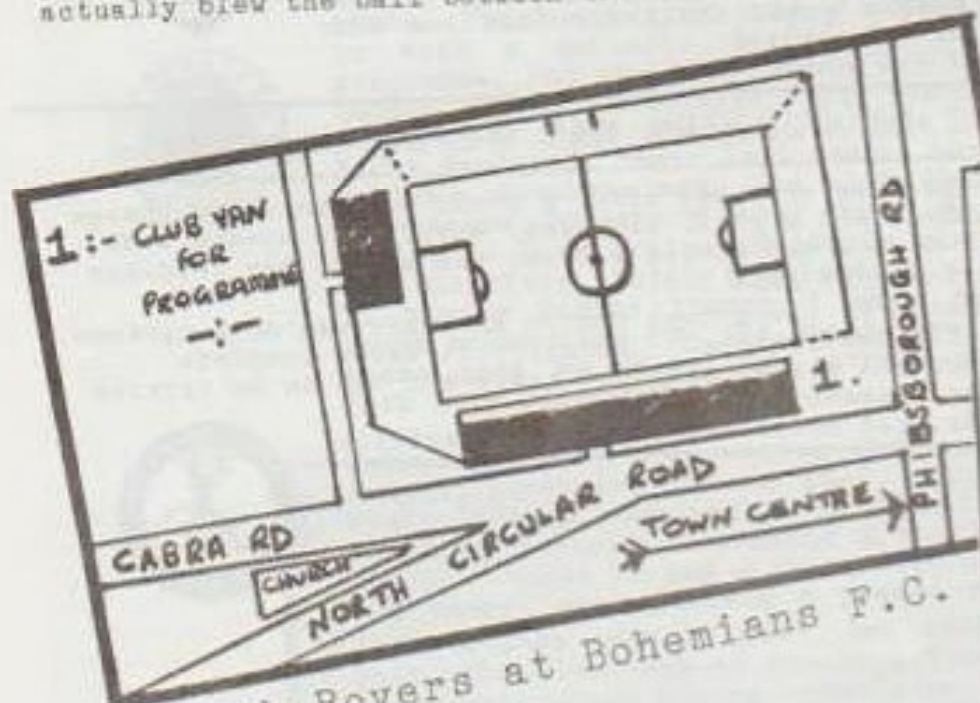
On a recent holiday to Dublin I managed to visit the HOME of Shamrock Rovers in the Premier Division of the Opel League of Ireland. You will see the word HOME is in capital letters, as Rovers have brought a new meaning to groundhopping.

Dalymount Park is their third home ground in 16 months (Chelsea fans beware), and is in fact the home of Bohemians F.C.

During the 1987-88 season, Rovers shared with Home Farm F.C. at Tolka Park, after losing their original home ground at Milltown, due to its then owners wishing to re-develop the ground, minus the club.

Bohemians ground can be found in Phibsborough, West Dublin 7, and is easily reached from the town centre by bus No. 22 or 38A. The ground itself is located behind a row of houses just off the North Circular Road, opposite St. Peter's Church. The ground holds approximately 20-25,000, and is terraced on three sides with no cover except for behind one goal, which even then, is only half covered (see diagram). The terraces offer a good view from most positions, rising steadily away from the pitch. As the top price for the main stand is only £4, it may suit any hoppers to take a pew for a change, although the stand itself needs a good roofer, as irregular sky-lights have appeared over what seems many years. Major repairs to the stand have been completed using corrugated plastic sheeting which shows it in a more dilapidated state than it really is. It runs the entire length of the pitch with a standing enclosure in front of the 500 or so seats. The fans are fenced in on all four sides of the ground, with an additional wire mesh fence at each end which is approximately four times the size of the goals, to protect the supporters!

During the League Cup match v. Longford Town, which Rovers won 2-0, played in gale force windy conditions, these mesh fences were well employed. This wind actually blew the ball between two defenders for the first goal.



Shamrock Rovers at Bohemians F.C.

Right: The matchday programme of Shamrock Rovers F.C.



The programme, priced at 50p, consisted of 16 pages which included 4 pages of ads. There were only 4 photos in the entire production, but did include a good editorial, a brief history of Longford Town, plus all the Rovers fixtures for the season. Overall not a bad effort, but slightly overpriced.

Most games are played on a Sunday in Ireland, with a 3.30pm kick-off. The many pubs in the area close between 2pm and 4pm, but a cup of tea, etc. can be obtained just around the corner from the ground in a Macdonalds or, in what passes for the local Kentucky. Both are OK.

Until Rovers return to their Glenshane Park ground, the crowds will hover around the 300-500 mark, and are in fact down a staggering 97% since leaving Milltown.

A special action group called K.R.A.M. (Keep Rovers at Milltown), has been set up to try and accomplish this by no means easy feat, but seem to have achieved a great deal already, by replacing the previous owners with genuine supporters on the Board.

The club at the start of the 1987-88 season were less than 1 hour or so from being expelled from the League and going out of existence, but in the end common sense prevailed and Rovers played at Milltown. Contrary to what we may have heard or read about Rovers, there was hardly any trouble during the home games at Tolka Park with one fan arrested for 'mooning' at K.R.A.M. supporters who were standing outside the ground.

For those interested in collecting Rovers programmes, there was only one issued all last season for home matches. This being the match v. Derry. Normally the supporters club would print programmes, but for this game the owners needing the revenue decided to produce one. Print runs are usually around 300-500 mark for 1988-89 season, so last year's programme might be scarce.

With the overall friendliness of the Irish people well known, a 'hop' to Dublin can be a refreshing break. With this in mind the following information may be of interest to readers:-

FOOTBALL GROUNDS IN DUBLIN

Bohemians : Dalymount Park, Phibsboro' Dublin 7. Tel: 300923.

St. Patricks Athletic : Richmond Park, Inchicore, Dublin 8. Tel: 755582.

Shelbourne : Harolds Cross Stadium, Dublin 6. Tel: 727788.

Home Farm : Tolka Park, Dublin 9. Tel: 373091.

H.C.D. : Belfield Park, Stillorgan, Dublin. Tel: 694684.

The League of Ireland have their offices in the centre of Dublin, and are not too hard to find, at 80 Merrion Square, Dublin 2. Tel: 765120.

CHRISTOPHER ASHBRIDGE WRITES (from page 12)

A couple of years ago I came across an edition of the 'National Geographic' Magazine, which had a feature on Greenland. A close look at one of the photographs showed, quite clearly, a full-size shale football pitch, railed off in the capital, Nuuk. I expect it is pretty certain that all the grounds in Greenland consist of shale pitches and nothing else, and it must be ranked as extremely improbable that any programmes have ever been produced in Greenland, despite the fact that the national team sometimes plays internationals against Iceland (who actually field a sub-standard side) and the Faeroe Islands.

One thing that amazes me is how the Greenlandic clubs manage to afford travelling expenses to away fixtures, as many of the villages and towns (Nuuk is the only real town) are hundreds of miles apart.

If you were to travel on a ship looking for more football grounds in the Arctic you wouldn't come across many more than those already mentioned. Jan Mayen Island is uninhabited, but on Spitzbergen (Svalbard) there are quite a reasonable number of residents. I do not know whether there are any clubs or competitive football here, but I do know that a special representative match takes place once a year between teams from the respective Soviet and Norwegian communities. I hope this article hasn't made you want to turn up your central heating, but at least the Faeroe Islands, the subject of my next article, does have a more moderate climate than Greenland. If anyone has information on football in obscure nooks and crannies of the world, please do not hesitate to send in an article to GHM. My address for the list as mentioned above is: 64 Nursery Road, Southgate, London, N14 5QH.

Corrections: There were a few errors in my column in issue 14 of GHM. The club printed as Knjilbo should read Krylbo, and the sentence 'there are no longer any Swedish grounds Christopher Ashbridge hasn't been to' should read 'Hammarby IF are no longer a club Christopher Ashbridge hasn't been to' (see GHM No.4).



STEVE PETTIT'S GROUNDHOPPER'S CLUB NEWS

At the end of this current season I will be stepping down as Secretary of the Groundhoppers Club, and I have arrived at this decision for a variety of reasons, some of which I will bore you with now.

To begin with, there is the time factor. My increased involvement at Hednesford Town means I have less spare time on my hands of late, and I must own up here and say how much I am enjoying being involved with a football club again. Not that I'm about to give up 'groundhopping', mind you. I am still able to get to new grounds on a regular basis, and count myself lucky to have two sources of pleasure in football.

Another deciding factor, and possibly the most relevant one, is that by the end of the season I will have been running the Groundhoppers Club for two and a half years. By then, I think the time will be right for somebody else to step in and introduce some new ideas of their own. Steve King and Ron Jones have offered to take over the organising of conventions from next season - an offer which pleases me a great deal, as I think the two of them will do a good job in this respect. With Groundhopper Magazine now in its second year and going well, they have established many new contacts, and will no doubt introduce a few innovations of their own into the format of future conventions. One thing I will continue to organise is the minibus trips, as they are not particularly time consuming.

The Groundhoppers Club is now quite well established, and Steve and Ron are both very keen to ensure its future growth. They feel the club would be well served by the introduction of a committee, which seems like a good idea to me, and with this in mind we will probably utilise our final convention of the season to hold our first 'A.G.M.', when, hopefully, enough people will come forward for a full committee to be formed. Steve and Ron will also use this event to outline their plans for 1989-90 and beyond, and also to explain the progression of the financial aspects of their set-up. Further details of all this will follow in due course, but in the meantime I would like to join Steve by welcoming YOUR views on the above idea, and possibly a few suggestions for the future.....

Pete Lomas, the 'Executive General Dogbody' at Cannock Chase Football Club, has been in touch again regarding staging a convention at his club later on in the season. We are now looking at a Saturday in March, when Ludlow Town will be the visitors for a Banks's Brewery League match - date still to be confirmed. A special programme (probably 40 pages) will be issued, and once again Groundhoppers United will be in action, and there will also be our customary quiz. Watch this space for further details.....

I have not yet been back in touch with Ken Green of North Shields regarding an April convention, but hope to do so shortly. Would anybody living in the Midlands who would be interested in travelling there by minibus please let me know? We already have six names, but the more the merrier! A full busload would bring the cost of the trip down to around £8 - £10 per person, which compares well to other modes of transport. (MY TELEPHONE NUMBER IS 05438 3002).

Accrington Stanley's Ruth Chadwick has sent me a list of the club's souvenirs, which can all be obtained direct from Ruth's home address. These include: Scarves (£4.25). Ties (£5.50). Pennants (£3.00). Badges (£1.30). Key Fobs (£1.00). And Programmes (40p). Postage extra on all orders. Ruth's address is:- 210, Avenue Parade, Accrington, Lancashire, BB5 6QE.

The tentacles of the Groundhoppers Club spread ever wider..... I recently had a telephone call from Karl-Heinz Stein, who resides in Germany and gets to many matches over here in England. Karl-Heinz is now our first German member as a result of that call, and joins Patric Rimmer from France as one of our overseas representatives.

Now on to the Tea Bar of the Year Award, and two more nominations from Andy Molden. His first is the tea bar at Harefield United, where alongside the standard fare of hot drinks, pies, burgers, etc, you can also buy home made apple turnovers and pastries, which Andy says come highly recommended. He was also impressed with the fare on offer at Flackwell Heath, where your drinks are served in china cups. (Are the chips extra, Andy?). Please keep sending in YOUR nominations for what must be the daftest competition in non-League football.

WESTON-SUPER-MARE

WHO PUT THE 'SUPER' IN WESTON-SUPER-MARE?

PREPARATION

Thanks to the excellent road and rail directions issued by the host club well in advance of the great day, none of the weary travellers wending their way from Wales, Wolverhampton, the West Midlands, London, and elsewhere, had any difficulties in finding the ground on the day of our sixth Groundhoppers Convention.

Commercial Manager Phil Wright was there to greet us, standing proudly in front of his club's Woodspring Park ground and sizing up the opposition, as the United players took to the changing rooms in preparation for the Big Match. We arrived in dribs and drabs, we footballing fanatics from all points of the compass, and after donning the red tops kindly supplied by the host club, we began our tactical talks, which kicked off with a question from Dudley's own David Gorton: "What shape is the ball, again?".

Our match was to take place on a playing field a few hundred yards from Woodspring Park, and after negotiating a busy roundabout and warding off more than a few odd stares from curious passers-by in cars and on bikes, we finally arrived at the arena which was so soon to witness a bizarre mix of triumph and tragedy. The problem of surplus players for United was soon settled by a quick word with the Ref, Stan Slocombe, who readily agreed to allow Groundhoppers United to field no less than thirteen players.

FIRST HALF STALEMATE

With an all time record crowd of 40 watching, the Big Match finally got under way. Huffing and Puffing, Slipping and sliding, both teams began the match in a cautious way, with the onus very much on safety first. There were more passes back to the goalkeepers in the opening fifteen minutes than in any ninety minutes of an England International match. But as the match wore on, the fitter and faster Weston players gained the upper hand, and came close on several occasions. Rob Davidson made a couple of fine saves and quite a few lucky ones. At the other end, Jim Dunn found the net twice, but his fine efforts were disallowed for offside both times. By the time the Referee blew his whistle to end

the first half, both sets of players were more than ready for the brief respite.

H-T: Weston S.M. 0, G.H. United 0.

DEFENSIVE SUICIDE

The second half set off at a crackling pace, with both teams stepping up a gear. Within two minutes of the re-start United were ahead, after a fine through ball found PETTIT. He outpaced two home defenders, drew the goalkeeper off his line, and hammered the ball into the roof of the net. Five minutes later the trick was repeated, with a Smith pass finding Dunn and Pettit on the break. With the Weston defence caught flat-footed, PETTIT rounded the 'keeper and found the net to give United a solid looking 2 - 0 lead.

From then on it was downhill all the way for United, as Weston regained their first half form and came back into the match with a vengeance. Within a minute of the second goal for United, Weston had pulled one back, as BARTLETT's shot took a slight deflection to deceive Rob 'Oops-adalay' Davidson.

The United defence were then in tatters as Club Chairman Paul BLISS knocked in Weston's equaliser, and worse was to come. Caught on the break for the umpteenth time, the United players were slow to recover as the Weston forwards bore down on goal. Lone defender Chris Oakley did well to gain possession of the ball in the penalty area, but his attempt to dribble his way out of trouble backfired, and the ball ran loose to Weston's Club Secretary Spud MILSON, who eagerly snapped up his chance to give the host club a winning lead.

RESULT: Weston S.M. 3, G.H. United 2.

FOOTNOTES After the match, the United players agreed that debutant Mark Herron was our star performer. Meanwhile, Weston's Commercial Manager Phil Wright has informed me that, following our friendly match, the Weston players have decided to start up a team to play friendly matches against teams of supporters from other clubs in the Great Hills League, and at the time of writing they were hoping to play Exmouth Town later in the season. (Also a match against Bridgwater Town).

THE 'PROP' DOES IT AGAIN

After a refreshing shower it was time to avail ourselves of the host club's superb

....Continued on next page

..bar facilities, where an excellent range of hot meals and snacks can be had for a reasonable price, as well as a good choice of ales, etc. Some of the Weston players joined us (those from the friendly match, I hasten to add), and we discussed the match in a relaxed atmosphere. It was generally agreed that the result was a right one, and our very friendly hosts then surprised us by entering a dozen people for our Prize Soccerquiz. The quiz was run on an improved format, and produced a few moments of hilarity before we eventually came to a tie-break between the two leading teams of two. The pairing of David 'Professor' Gorton and Mick Coyne got there first, with the correct answer to the tie-break question, thereby just pipping Bill Berry and 12 year old Richard Owen for the cash prize.

THE MAIN MATCH

In our three conventions held last season, the host clubs managed



between them to lose their main matches without even scoring a goal. (Two 1 - 0 and one 2 - 0 wins for visiting clubs). Weston-Super-Mare ended this bleak run with a first half goal in a match which was slightly disappointing, and survived a few late scores to hold on to their first half lead against tough tackling Bideford.

Weston produced a very good programme for this match, which included

a four page centre insert devoted to the friendly match and the Groundhoppers generally. The programme is certainly good value at just 30p.

SUMMARY

It was another very good day out for the Groundhoppers, and I would like to go on record as saying that the set-up at Woodspring Park is very impressive. What particularly pleased me about this day was that so many of the home supporters and Club Officials joined in the fun, and went out of their way to make us feel welcome. They are a very friendly and most pleasant bunch of people, and I am sure that all those hoppers who attended on the day will join me in wishing them all the best for the future. (It is also nice to know that people are beginning to discover that most Groundhoppers haven't got two heads and peculiar habits!). Once again, it's a day like this that underlines the spirit of kinship so prevalent in the sport at this level. Finally, I would like to thank everybody at Weston-Super-Mare, and Phil Wright in particular, for the part they played in making this event so enjoyable.

My headline for this report was 'Who put the 'Super' in Weston-Super-Mare?'. The answer is the people, who really are super.

FOOTNOTE

A gentleman by the name of Dave (I'm sorry, Dave, but in the confusion I forgot to write your full name down) dropped in to tell us about his own club, Bridgwater Town (1984) F.C., and to show us copies of the Official Yearbook issued by the club.

The Yearbook sells for £2, and contains 60 pages of information on the club's progress in the Somerset Senior League. Of particular interest to Groundhoppers would be the excellent photographic content, which includes shots of various grounds in the Somerset Senior League, and the comprehensive League Directory at the rear of the book.

The club need to raise £3,000 in order to finance the completion of their new stand, and hope to raise part of that sum through the sale of their Yearbook. To order your copy, which I consider good value for money, please write to: Miss Sally Wright, Club Secretary, Bridgwater Town (1984) F.C., Fairfax Park, Bridgwater, Somerset.

**Dave Collins put in appearance at the convention, and I didn't recognise him because his photograph in this magazine does him no justice at all! Perhaps Dave and I should get together and engage the services of a professional photographer!



MY MONTH

A REGULAR LOOK AT
A TYPICAL MONTH
IN THE LIFE OF ONE
OF OUR READERS

This month:

JOHN BOWER of Leamington Spa

If you would like to send in an article for this page, please write to us now!

This month, it is the turn of JOHN BOWER of LEAMINGTON SPA to tell us about a typical groundhopping month for him. He writes about events during MAY 1988.

I started the month off with every groundhoppers dream - three new grounds in a day. First, I went to CHIPPING NORTON in the morning for the Hellenic League Division One Challenge Cup Final between CHELTENHAM TOWN RESERVES and PURTON. Cheltenham won 1-0 on a sloping pitch in typical Bank Holiday weather conditions ie: cold, wet and windy!

Afterwards, I headed south-west for the Hellenic League Premier Division Challenge Cup Final played at SHARPNESS between BISHOPS CLEVE and YATE TOWN. 'The Fort' is one of the most out-of-the-way grounds I have been to, having to drive through the docks and over railway lines. I was rewarded with an absolute cracker of a match, one of the best I have seen all season, with Bishops Cleeve beating the champions 4-3 after extra time.

The evening match was a Gloucestershire County League game in the Forest of Dean, between CINDERFORD and STONEHOUSE. I drove to Cinderford in torrential rain and when I arrived at the ground, the referee and linesmen were inspecting a water-logged pitch in their wellies, but fortunately they decided to play the match. Cinderford then proceeded to crush bottom-of-the-table Stonehouse 5-0, who had tried three different players in goal in the second half due to injuries. Not so many goals on Tuesday evening. I drove to EUGBROOKE ST. MICHAELS for their United Counties League Division One encounter with THRAPSTON VENTURAS, with the visitors winning an uninspiring match 2-1.

Thursday 5th May and Beauer Homes League Premier Division action at Butlin Road where V.S. RUGBY took on AYLESBURY UNITED with the visitors needing just one more point for the Championship and promotion to the C.M. Vauxhall Conference. After looking uncatchable a month earlier, Aylesbury had a bad case of 'promotion jitters' allowing Dartford to overtake them, so the stage was set for an interesting 90 minutes which it proved to be, with Aylesbury getting the draw they needed for promotion, but not before V.S. Rugby gave them a run for their money. A crowd of 1,541 saw the 2-2 draw.

Saturday, and back to normal - COVENTRY CITY v. Q.P.R. (yawn!), another goalless draw on the Highfield Road mud and flats areas.

Sunday, and up to Lancashire for the SMAC Challenge Cup Final. HORWICH RMI against WEYMOUTH and despite losing their goalkeeper through injury in the first minute, Horwich comfortably beat a disappointing Weymouth team 2-0.

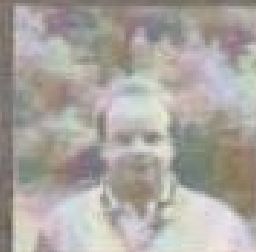
Tuesday evening at PELSALL VILLA, with football on one side of the Clubhouse, and cricket the other. The football was worth watching, with the visitors STOUPPORT SWIFTS, winning 2-0. Pelsall produce an excellent programme, one of the best in the Banks's Brewery League.

After going all winter without a cold, I get an absolute stinker in the middle of May, but being a dedicated groundhopper, I drag myself off my sick bed to visit CANNOCK CHASE on Friday 13th May where the home team beat DARLASTON 2-1 in a dire game. A word of thanks due here to Mr. M. Clementson, the Cannock Chase Secretary who sent me a programme for the above game. For once the excuse of "sorry, programmes are still at the printers" was genuinely true.

Finally my last match of the season (my 139th) was a black and band affair. The last-ever match at the Windmill Ground, LEAMINGTON featuring two teams of former players selected by two of the best non-league managers in the Midlands, Jimmy Knox of V.S. Rugby and Graham Allner of Kidderminster. Both are very successful ex-AF Leamington managers.

For the record, Jimmy Knox's team won 3-1, but it was not a day for celebrating. Leamington is now without a senior football team thanks to a local council who are more interested in christmas lights and going on free trips to obscure towns in France and Germany than in providing sports facilities for the public. Needless to say the council's colours are blue and not red!

RON JONES' PROGRAMME SCENE



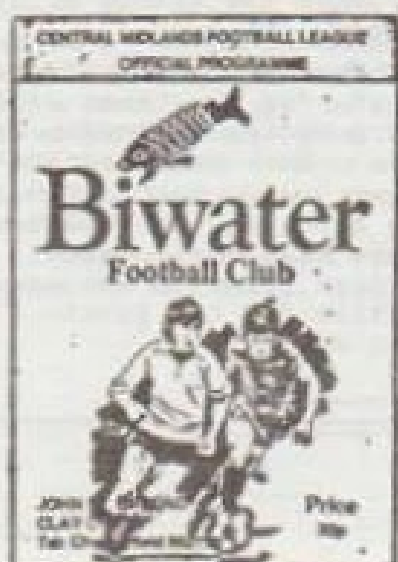
BY THE MAN
WHO KNOWS HIS
NON-LEAGUE
PROGRAMMES

Before I begin this month's programme reviews from the non-league scene, I would like to tell you about the forthcoming Giant New Year Programme Fair to be held on Sunday 8th January 1989 at The Great Western Royal Hotel, Praed Street (next to Paddington B.R. station), which will be open from 10.30am until 4pm. GROUNDHOPPER MAGAZINE will have its own stall at this fair, with a large number of current season non-league programmes including many smaller clubs that are harder to get hold of such as those issuing for FA Vase games, etc. Also on the stall, we will have back copies of the magazine, and we will be promoting the magazine with special leaflets given out to everyone attending the fair. Also, the February 1989 issue of the magazine will be on general sale on the day. There will be all the country's top programme dealers in attendance, so please make sure you attend this Giant New Year Fair - and we will look forward to seeing you at the GROUNDHOPPER MAGAZINE stall in particular.

Please keep the non-league programmes coming in for reviewing on these pages. I am sorry that they cannot be returned, so please only send spare copies in, but we are particularly interested in unusual ones or programmes issued by clubs on a one-off basis such as for FA Vase matches.

To start our reviews this month, we have received the offering from Central Midland League side BIWATER, who this season have changed their name from Clay Cross Works, and the 30p issue is a tremendous effort. There are 32 pages, with a glossy cover in grey and orange on white, with those two familiar footballers yet again in evidence. Although more than half the pages contain adverts, the people involved in producing this are to be congratulated because there are many interesting features including Editor's Page, feature on the opposition, competition page, tables, full fixtures and statistics on the centre pages including player-by-player listings for every match as seen in most Football League programmes, match reports of recent games, plus much more. And with a new name, this will surely be a much sought-after programme for non-league collectors.

Not such a new name is LEYTONSTONE ILFORD from the Vauxhall-Opel League, and this season, they are producing a 32 page issue for 40p, which includes a glossy full-colour cover containing a photo of the main stand at Green Pond Road. The teams are lined-up on page 3, and there is a general club news and editorial page which is followed by fixtures and results and a page of action photos. Recent match reports are well documented, and particularly interesting is the 4-page centre pull-out on the opposition, including fact file, pen pictures, past results between the two clubs, and a reproduction of their club programme. Other items of interest are league tables from the VOL, player profile, supporters club notes, and two pages of VOL news as well as a look back to a match from years gone by. Programme Editor Len Llewellyn certainly has a value-for-money programme with plenty of reading content and varied features. Up north and HALLAM from the Northern Counties East Premier Division are producing a 32-pager this season, with no cover price but included with admission. They play at Sandygate, which is the oldest football ground in the world, and this is proudly displayed over



the cover of the programme which is on shiny paper printed in black ink. All the inside pages are printed in black on blue paper, with an outer shell of 24 pages full of adverts, and the centre eight pages full of club news, results, and the usual information found in non-league programmes. The team line-ups can be found on the centre pages. Not a bad effort although heavy on advertising, but good use of blue and white pages throughout. Back to the VOL, and down to PARNBOROUGH TOWN for their 50p issue for 36 pages. The yellow and blue cover contains match details and an action photo of a recent match, and this is followed by an Editorial page, manager's column, two pages on the opposition including club history and pen-pictures, etc, then comes club news and match reports of recent matches followed by the 'Press Box' column, with the two page statistical analysis on the centre pages, including fixtures & results, league table, list of appearances and goalscorers, etc. There is a flashback to previous meetings between the two clubs, reserve & youth team news, action photos, and a very good VOL update, looking at the latest situation in the other leagues. The notice-board comes next, containing other fixtures in the VOL, a brief piece about the referee, away travel news, etc, and the team line-ups are on the back page. Although pricey at 50p, and containing nearly 18 pages of adverts, there is a neat layout and a good amount of reading in this programme, and with smaller-than-usual headings to the pages, more can be crammed in to each page, making it good value for money.

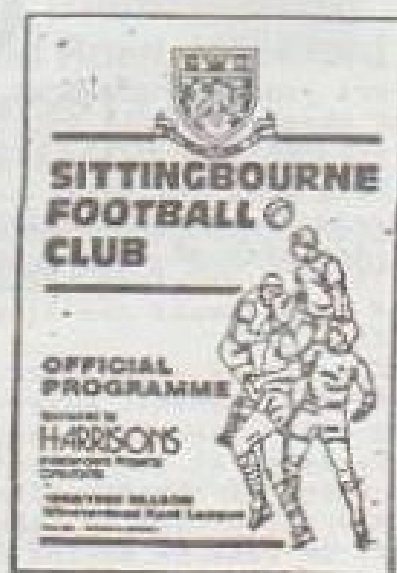
Senior Women League club RUSHDEN TOWN this season have a 30p programme at their Hayden Road, and this contains 32 pages, with a glossy cover containing a black & white action photo and a red striped background. There are 19 pages of adverts in this one, but there is still a fair amount to read because included is a page of club news, a page of manager's notes, good coverage of the opposition, reserve team review, player profiles, centre-page team line-ups, youth team page, league table, pen-pictures of the opposition, commercial page, and finally results and fixtures. Not a bad effort, and will probably not win any prizes for originality but nevertheless gives the reader everything he needs to know and includes all the usual items one comes to expect from a programme. And at only 30p, it is not bad value at all. Finally this month, our last review takes us down the pyramid slightly to the Winstonlead Kent League to look at the effort from SITTINGBOURNE, who include the programme with admission, with additional copies on sale at 20p. There are 16 pages, which are unstapled, and a glossy white cover, printed in red and black. The outer 12 pages contain mainly adverts, plus a full page pre-printed club history of Sittingbourne. The centre pages contain team line-ups, a few brief club notes, and reports of recent matches.

Although not the most interesting programme around, it is still a useful addition to a collection, and what it lacks in originality or content makes up for in effort, although the somewhat 'dated' cover design with its simple layout and a drawing of players in action needs to be looked at for future seasons.

But with some clubs in the Kent League a little unpredictable when it comes to programme issuing, this is still a welcome publication by the Roman Road club.

So that is it for yet another month. It just leaves me to wish you all a very happy christmas and a successful new year programme-wise, and Steve and I will be looking forward to meeting you all at our stall at the Giant New Year Fair on Sunday 8th January 1989.

NEXT MONTH IN THE MAGAZINE, I WILL BE REVIEWING, AMONGST OTHERS, PROGRAMMES FROM Y TELINHELI, TIVERTON, CLEATOR MOOR CELTIC, CLIPSTONE MINERS WELFARE, PLUS OTHERS.



SPOT the GROUND

— COMPETITION —

UP TO
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can be won

Our "Spot the Ground" competition is popular with our readers, with large numbers now sending in entries each month, making it one of the the favourite features in the magazine. However, every month there is a winner, so we are obviously not making it hard enough for you lot out there. Last month's answer did fool quite a lot of you though, and there were many wrong answers as well as a large number of correct ones. It was of course KIMOUIN TOWN, and the false clue was No.1, they are not a north west club, but a South-west club, and the winner as picked out of the hat by the Editor is:- MR. T. BONE, 11 MILNER PLACE, WINCHESTER, HANTS, SO22 4AY. Congratulations, Mr T Bone. You now have a "steak" in our magazine!! (Sorry, no doubt you are sick of that joke by now!). Anyway, the £5 cash prize will be on it's way to you in the next few days, so it will pay for a few pints at christmas. Incidentally, the quiz & competition advertised to appear in this issue has been held over for a month, due to lack of space and also because the prize on offer of the "Non-League grounds of Great Britain" is delayed at the publishers, so we will be having this great "bonus" competition in our next issue.

Now onto this month's competition. Remember, it is easy to enter, and you have the chance to win up to £100 cash (if it wasn't for the clever-clogs who keep winning each month). Just study the two photos of a non-league ground below, and using your skill and general knowledge of the non-league scene, work out from the six clues which club is featured. But remember, as always, one of the six clues is a red herring and is false. Please make sure your entry reaches us by no later than Wednesday 21st December. Send your entry to:- SPOT THE GROUND COMPETITION, GAME No.7, GROUNDHOPPER MAGAZINE, 439 BERTON ROAD, WANDSWORTH, LONDON, SW18 5LB.

All correct entries will be placed in a hat and a winner (if any) drawn by the Editor on Thursday 22nd December. Answer and winner announced in the February 1989 issue. There will be a brand new "Spot the Ground" competition next month.



Game 7

Here are your SIX clues as to which club is featured this month. But remember - one of these clues is not true. Good luck!

- 1). This South-West club are about 180 miles from London.
- 2). They have had great success in the FA Vase over recent years, being finalists and semi-finalists.
- 3). They play at ----- Lane.
- 4). Their first-team colours are blue and white.
- 5). A very famous pop singer who has had recent top ten success comes from this town.
- 6). The record attendance at their ground was 2,200 for the semi-final of the FA Vase against Halesowen.

Got it yet? Yes, it's easy, so make sure those entries reach us by Wednesday 21st December at the latest, and from this competition onwards, you MUST also state which of the six clues is incorrect as well as name the club. If you fail to state which clue is false, the entry will not count. Answers can, if you prefer, be sent on sealed envelopes or postcards, but please remember to include your name and address. Good luck, and get writing!

Groundhopper Magazine General Guidance Notes

1. The main aim of the Groundhopper Magazine and the jointly run Groundhoppers Club is to promote Non-League football and to give its subscribers and club members the opportunity of contributing in the form of articles, letters and photographs, etc.

2. Membership of the Groundhoppers Club is FREE. To join, write to Steve Pettit (Membership Secretary) at the address on the inside front cover, enclosing full details such as your name, address, groundhopping interests, etc. Also, please enclose a s.a.s. for the return of your membership card.

3. Once you become a member you are entitled to certain privileges as outlined in the club literature detailed elsewhere.

4. As a club it will be financed in association with Groundhopper Magazine, and all members will receive an annual statement of accounts at the A.G.M. on a date to be arranged, probably on the day of a convention at a non-league venue to be decided. Full details will appear in the magazine.

5. There will be conventions, organised trips to grounds and fundraising events throughout the year, jointly arranged by the Groundhopper Magazine and Groundhoppers Club.

6. Groundhopper Magazine is published EVERY month throughout the year, with current subscription rates shown on the inside front cover. Contained in each issue are full details of all Club events such as news of conventions, etc.

7. If sending photographs for inclusion in the magazine, please note that there may be a delay in returning them if more than six are sent at once. The process for preparing them for publication is expensive, and we can therefore only use photos for one issue at a time. Please ALWAYS indicate when sending photos whether you would like them returned or whether we can retain them.

8. The magazine is usually despatched on the 15th of each month, subject to copy deadlines being met with our printers. You should receive your magazine about two weeks prior to cover date. (ie: January issue received 16th or 17th December)

9. We cannot be held responsible for material being lost in the post when being returned to originator after use (such as photos, etc.)

10. The magazine is available on SUBSCRIPTION ONLY. When you are coming to the end of your subscription we will send you a letter reminding you that it is time to renew, and will enclose a new subscription form.

11. A joint Groundhoppers Club and Magazine Committee has been formed, with the purpose of helping to organise events, help with fund-raising, etc. If YOU would like to join please write to Steve King for full details.

12. A limited number of back issues of Groundhopper Magazine are available from Ron Jones, 24 Poplar Road, Wimbledon, London SW19 3JR. For current availability please check elsewhere in this month's issue.

13. For copy dates for this year's issues, please see elsewhere for full details, which also includes despatch dates for the magazine.

14. Please give the magazine maximum publicity whenever possible, and support us at the Annual General Meeting and at conventions and all organised events.

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